MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

16 FEBRUARY 1983

Lebanon

Lebanese Army units completed their deployment in the greater Beirut area "without significant incidents," according to Beirut radio. Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan later declared that a process of uniting the Lebanese and strengthening the Lebanese Government's authority is underway, the radio reported.

Major Sa'd Haddad, leader of the "free Lebanon army," deployed a "limited force" of armored personnel carriers in An-Nabatiyah, ITIM announced. An AFP report citing informed sources said the militia detachment entered the city "to take control." Another AFP report said President Amin al-Jumayyil requested U.S. Ambassador Robert Dillon's intervention to stop "the extension of the state of free Lebanon" declared by Haddad. Meanwhile, Israeli officials said Israel and Lebanon have agreed that Haddad's militia will be "reincorporated" into the Lebanese Army although a Lebanese military source denied any deicision had been made on Haddad's future, according to Jerusalem radio and AFP.

In another development gunmen attacked an Israeli patrol south of Sidon and killed three Israeli soldiers, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported.

Israel

Former Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon will no longer participate in deliberations on Israel's policy in Lebanon. All of his authority on the senior steering committee for the negotiations with Lebanon will be transferred to Defense Minister-designate Moshe Arens as soon as he assumes his post, according to the paper MA'ARIV.

In another development members of the European Parliament delegation currently visiting Israel promised that they will work "to ease" the sanctions imposed on Israel in the wake of the war in Lebanon, Jerusalem radio announced.

Palestine National Council Session

Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, submitted his political report to the Palestine National Council (PNC). It included an examination of the current state of the PLO and the international situation before and during Israel's invasion of Lebanon, Algiers radio reported. Qaddumi called on the Palestinians to learn from the Israeli aggression and formulate a new plan incorporating the consolidation of unity and the strengthening of resistance inside the occupied territories, the radio added.

Addressing the PNC session, Syrian delegate Tawriq Salihah affirmed that the future of the Palestinian revolution is linked with Palestinian national unity, Algiers radio noted. According to SANA, Salihah reviewed the role of Syrian forces in Lebanon and declared that Syria will continue to carry out its honorable duties and will not be deterred from fighting. He asserted that those "wagering on the possibility of eliminating Syria by an Israeli military blow" must realize that Syria will endure and strike back even harder, SANA added.

During a news conference reported by Algiers radio, Fatah Central Committee member Khalil al-Wazir commented on progress of the PNC session and confirmed unanimity among the PLO factions on all points discussed. He denied rumors that some Palestinian elements had walked out of the meeting and stated that all particiapted in a "normal way." Expressing doubts about any possible U.S. guarantees for basic Palestinian rights,

Al-Wazir announced that the PLO is about to publish documents by U.S. envoy Philip Habib guaranteeing the security of the Palestinian civilian population if the Palestinians withdrew from Beirut, according to AFP. He asked what guarantees the United States can provide for the PLO's future after the Shatila and Sabra massacres, AFP added.

Cheysson Tour

Following his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, French External Relations Minister Claude Cheysson expressed his conviction that Syria would withdraw its forces from Lebanon at the Lebanese Government's request when the Isareli forces withdraw completely, Radio Monte Carlo disclosed citing Cheysson's remarks during a Damascus news conference. Damascus radio said Cheysson called for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and for Lebanese authority to be restored throughout the entire country. The French minister concluded his visit to Syria and expressed satisfaction with his Damascus talks, according to the radio.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

Iran's Air Force and air defense units shot down two Iraqi aircraft, an Iranian military communique broadcast by Tehran radio asserted. However, an Iraqi military spokesman denied the report and challenged Iran to prove its claims, INA reported.

In an open letter to the Iranian people broadcast by Baghdad Voice of the Masses radio, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn described Iran's recent offensive as an act that led to the deaths of "thousands" of Iranians without any useful results for the present or future of the Iranian people. Saddam Husayn urged each Iranian to ask himself why he is continuing a war that brings only losses and ruin to Iran. Regarding the Tehran rulers' call for overthrowing the Iraqi regime, he declared that the method used in Iran to depose the shah cannot be applied to Iraq because the Iraqi people and army are nationally and spiritually tied to their land and leadership.

In another development informed sources affirmed that the Iraqi president is preparing for an "urgent" visit to Cairo to discuss the Gulf war with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, the Kuwatti paper AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM revealed 14 February. The sources noted that Jordan's King Husayn will attend some of the meetings, the paper added.

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PALESTINE COUNCIL SESSION CONTINUES IN ALGIERS

Elections, Agenda Reported

LD151032 Algiers APS in Arabic 0800 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Algiers, 15 Feb (APS) -- Khalid al-Fahum was reelected chairman of the Palestine National Council [PNC] during the second PNC session last night. Salim an-Za'nun was elected first deputy and Mahmud Tayyim as second deputy, while Mahmad as-Sibba'i was elected secretary general.

Furthermore, the PNC last night approved its agenda, which consists of the following: 1) Review of the Executive Committee's political report; 2) Review of the PLO's financial report.

General discussions will be held on these two points, followed by speeches by the delegation heads.

During the second session last night, eight committees here formed: the political, military, financial, the occupied homeland, Palestinians in Lebanon affairs, popular organizations, information, and social committees.

Following the discussions and the formulation of draft recommendations and draft resolutions of the committees, members of the new PLO Executive Committee will be elected.

The PNC decided to include new members chosen from the Supreme Military Council.

[Algiers APS in Arabic at 1400 GMT on 15 February adds that Khalid al-Fahum "announced that is was sufficient to add 22 members from the Higher Military Council as new members of the PNC."]

15 Feb Morning Proceedings

LD151348 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] We have just managed to contact our correspondent at the Club des Pins who will inform us about the events of the second day of the work of the 16th session of the PNC. The work of the 16th session of the PNC resumed at 1100 today. At the beginning of the session Khalid al-Fahum gave the floor to the Indian delegate, who greeted the Palestinian revolution and its glorious steadfastness against the Zionist invasion.

After that the floor was given to the rapporteur of the judicial committee, which studied the question of adding new female mambers to the PNC last night. The rapporteur said that the committee studied the question from the legal viewpoint and found that the council has been convened with the attendance of 301 delegates -- that is, more than two-thirds of the members. With regard to the addition of new female mambers, he said that the vote is regarded as null and void because the female members obtained less than the required votes.

After that a debate took place, at the end of which Khalid al-Fahum announced that the question has been decided. He reaffirmed that the addition of new members should be made in accordance with an order to be submitted by the PLO Executive Committee.

Following a speech by the Moroccan delegate, the floor was given to George Hawi, who gave a detailed speech in the name of the Lebanese National Movement. Addressing the leaders of the Palestinian resistance, George Hawi said: Our and your battle in Lebanon is still at its peak. We have not yet finished the war. This is not a 6-day war, a 6-week war, or a 6-month war. This war has entered its 8th month and is continuing. He reaffirmed that the Lebanese national forces are continuously confronting the Zionist occupation forces.

After stressing the importance of the independence of the Palestinian decision, George Hawi said to the leaders of the Palestinian resistance: You should be proud because you were able to fight for 3 continuous months against the strongest Zionist-imperialist-reactionary aggression. He said: It is our right to demand that the disregard for Palestinian-Lebanese blood should be ended. After expressing greetings to all Lebanese and Palestinian nationalist forces and the Lebanese and Palestinian people who stood their ground against the Zionist occupier, George Hawi expressed the appreciation of the Lebanese National Movement to all those from near and far who helped and supported the Palestinian and Lebanese fighters.

He wondered why there was an Arab silence during the battle of Beirut and said: Why was the Arab summit conference held only after Sharon had realized, or after Sharon believed he had realized, the crime that he had planned in Lebanon? George Hawi praised the attitude of President Chadli Bendjedid and his speech yesterday in which he stressed the independence of the Palestinian decision. George Hawi said: From the position of Lebanese patriotism today, we have come to reaffirm our decision to continue our unity with you regardless of the sacrifices.

We would like to say that at this very moment when we are speaking to you the work of the council is being continued. The council is listening to a speech by Khalid Muhyi ad-Din. We will return to this speech in our evening bulletin.

We would like to mention that last night's session of the PNC lasted until after midnight, during which the agenda was approved and eight committees were formed. Khalid al-Fahum was reelected chairman of the PNC.

Iraqi, Moroccan Speeches

LD160340 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] The PNC resumed its 16th session at the Palais des Nations in Algiers. At a public session, the delegations from the fraternal and friendly countries as well as representatives of the liberation movements affirmed their countries' firm stands toward the Palestinian revolution, manifested in their constant aid and support for the PLO. They condemned the Zionist attacks against the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

At the public session held in the evening, the first speaker was the leader of the Mauritanian delegation. He affirmed Mauritania's unchanging stand toward the Palestinian revolution under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. After saluting the Palestinian leadership's spirit of responsibility, he called on the PNC to perpetuate Palestinian national unity. He concluded by calling on the Arab countries to participate in perpetuating this unity.

Next, Tawriq Salihah, the leader of the Syrian delegation, took the stand and affirmed that the future of the Palestinian revolution is linked to Palestinian national unity. After reviewing the Arab and international situation which is getting tenser as a result of U.S. attempts to impose its hegemony on the world and particularly on the Middle East, he stressed: Our awareness of the nature of the Arab-Zionist struggle -- and it is a struggle for existence and not a struggle for frontiers -- makes the road ahead and the choice clear. We must not lose our way; we must not lose clear sight of our goals or hesitate in making a stand.

On his part, Ahmed bin Sudah, the Moroccan delegate, in his speech affirmed that the triumph of the Palestinian revolution is inevitable in its confrontation with all challenges. He called for discarding Arab differences. The Arabs should unite and work for the implementation of the Fes resolutions which, he said, represent the Arabs' will to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Iraqi delegate called for an evaluation of the past, with all its positive and negative aspects, in order to lay down a comprehensive Arab strategy to confront the imperialist-Zionist onslaught. He also called for respect for an independent Palestinian decision and for the rejecting any trusteeship over the Palestinian revolution or its free will. After renewing Iraq's support for the Palestinian struggle under the leadership of the PLO, the speaker stressed the need to concentrate all Arab energies in these extremely crucial and sensitive circumstances. He also renewed Iraq's support for Lebanon in safeguarding its independence, unity, and Arab affiliation.

The delegates from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Czechoslovakia reaffirmed their countries' solidarity with the just cause of the Palestinian people and their heroic struggle under the leadership of the PLO to recover their legitimate national rights, including their right to establish their own independent state. They also denounced the U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance, a link in the U.S. imperialist plot to dominate the Middle East. The delegates of the socialist countries expressed their conviction that the PLO will come out of this session stronger and more invincible and more resolved to recover its usurped rights.

Syrian Delegate's Address

JN152207 Damascus SANA in Arabic 2105 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Algiers, 12 Feb (SANA) -- Comrade Tawriq Salihah, member of the Ba'th Party Regional Command, has read the Ba'th Party speech at the 16th session of the PNC currently convening in Algiers. Comrade Salihah pointed out that the invasion of Lebanon was meant to destroy Lebanon's unity and to turn it into a U.S.-Israeli protectorate, strike at the Palestinian resistance, liquidate the Palestinian cause, end the Palestinian problem, and impose capitulatory solutions on the Arab nation. He said the main aim of the invasion was to destroy Syrian military power in order to liquidate Syria's vanguard political role as the only principal stumbling block confronting the imperialist-Zionist moves.

Comrade Salihah said the PNC is being held during a period when there is an active movement to expand the Camp David policy in order to include Jordan and to complete one of Camp David's main links, the liquidation of the Palestinian issue so that another issue can replace it -- the struggle between those who support the Camp David policy and those who oppose it.

Comrade Salihah reviewed the role of the Syrian forces in Lebanon and their confrontation of the Zionist forces of invasion. This, he said, stemmed from Syria's commitment to its pan-Arab role, adding that Syria will continue to carry out its honorable duties and will not deviate from fighting and sacrifices by doubts cast by agents or be affected by a rancorous enemy or an ignorant friend. He said that those who cast doubts on Syria in the Arab world and those who attempt to sow despair and confusion will not weaken Syria's will and determination.

The head of the Syrian delegation said: Those who attempt to promote the capitulation by saying that Israel is militarily so strong that it cannot be defeated are willingly or unwillingly serving the enemy. They are not only making a mistake but also betraying the Arab nation. Salihah denounced the Reagan plan. He said this plan appears to serve peace but is in essence an attempt to support aggression and impose occupation as a fait accompli. It is aimed at forcing the Arabs to choose capitulation rather than genuine peace.

Salihah denounced those who make propaganda for the Egyptian regime and call for its return to the Arab fold. He said that these people must realize that they will only mislead themselves, because service to the cause is not rendered through inviting the PLO to recognize Israel, placing Egypt outside the Arab circle, and dropping its pan-Arab commitments.

He asserted that Syria, as the Arab citizens know, will continue to remain faithful to its principles, adhere its sovereignty, and be determined to proceed on the path it has chosen. Those wagering on the possibility of eliminating Syria by an Israeli military blow must realize that Syria's reply to any aggression will be decisive and firm and that Syria, under the leadership of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and its secretary general militant President Hafiz al-Asad, will endure any blow regardless of its size and, furthermore, will hit back with a stronger blow.

Comrade Salihah underlined Syria's rejection of any scheme that may relinquish pan-Arab and national rights in Palestine and the other Arab territories. He said that Palestine is a pan-Arab cause related to the Arab nation's fate, future, and security and that the struggle with the enemy has never been regional, but pan-Arab. He added that Syria rejects fragmentation or regionalization of the struggle and warns against any tampering with the cause.

Salihah added that Syria is not a support country [dawlat musandah] but a confrontation state which has organic and fateful ties with the cause. He firmly warned those who are preparing to sit at the negotiating table and said that this constitutes a grave challenge to the entire nation. He reiterated Syria's support for the Palestinian revolution, stressing that Syria will continue to stand alongside this revolution backed by the peoples and freemen of the world as well as the countries of the socialist bloc, foremost of them the Soviet Union, that friend which backs the Palestinian revolution and the Arab nation's struggle at this stage.

Concluding, Salihah greeted on behalf of Syria, its party, and leader Hafiz al-Asad the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied territories and wished the PNC success in achieving its missions.

15 Feb Evening Session

LD152149 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpts] The 16th session of the PNC resumed a short while ago at the Palais des Nations in Algiers.

In the (?evening) session, the PNC is continuing to listen to the speeches of the heads of the fraternal and friendly countries and representatives of liberation movements. The radio mission has provided us with the following report on these speeches:

The work of the 16th PNC session, in its second day, resumed this evening under the chairmanship of Khalid al-Fahum, the speaker. The invited delegations were given the opportunity to make their speeches.

It has been learned from other reliable sources that Yasir 'Arafat, PLO Executive Committee chairman, chaired a meeting at the margin of the session in which he dealt with organizational matters and preparations for the work of the committees which are formed by the PNC and which are expected to begin work tomorrow.

The morning session went on until about 1400. During that session a number of delegates spoke. We summarized their speeches in the 1300 newscast. Among them was Khalid Muhyi ad-Din, leader of the Egyptian National Progressive Unionist Grouping. As promised in the 1300 newscast, we now refer to his speech. He noted the Egyptian people's rejection of the Camp David plan and their resistance to the capitulationist line which emerged following As-Sadat's visit to occupied Jerusalem. He touched on the circumstances surrounding the holding of the session and the bets the Zionist enemy is placing against Palestinian national unity. He affirmed the need to achieve the unity of (?all) Palestinian people and to insist on seizing their (?rights). He recalled that the Palestinian issue is a fateful issue and that the Palestinian revolution, under the leadership of the PLO, is the sole one who possesses the (?direct right) to decide. On the occasion, he called on the patriotic Arab forces to support the PLO. Khalid Muhyi ad-Din noted that his party (?will sieze any opportunity) to build relations between the PLO and Arab Egypt.

Afterward, Mongi Kooli, the director of the Tunisian Socialist Destour Party, spoke. He noted that Arab unanimity is not enough because the issue is the issue of the Palestinians first, and there is no place for any trusteeship or leadership except that of the Palestinians [words indistinct]. Consequently, no solution will be reached without the Palestinians. Mr Kooli affirmed the importance of Palestinian national unity and lauded the heroic acts of the Palestinian fighters during the war in Lebanon and the gallant battle of Beirut.

The chairman of the UN committee on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people also spoke at the session. He talked about the activities of the committee concerning the Palestinian issue and observed that this session assumed great importance. He said that the work of the committee and the efforts it had been making from 1976 up to this day are still encountering the Israelis' intransigent attitude and obstacles put forth by Washington as a permanent member of the Security Council. He affirmed that the committee, despite all these obstacles, is continuing its activities inside and outside the United Nations to let public opinion know the dimensions of the Palestinian issue.

The last of the speakers was the Soviet delegate, who reaffirmed the stand of the Soviet Union toward the Palestinian issue. [passage indistinct]

USSR Delegate's Speech

LD151951 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1830 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Farida Belkouch report from Palais des Nations -- live or recorded]

[Text] Today is the second day of the PNC meeting. The session, suspended at 1430, resumed half an hour ago with more speeches by foreign delegates. These speeches will undoubtedly continue well into the night to allow, perhaps late in the night or tomorrow morning, the debates on the political report, debates which are keenly awaited and will take place after the reading of this report by Faruq Qaddumi, the head of the PLO Political Department.

As I was saying, the speeches by foreign delegates continue. In this half hour, four speakers took the stand: the representatives of Mauritania, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. All, of course, supported the just cause of the Palestinian people and all, of course, spoke in favor of the recovery of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This support was repeatedly voiced by the delegates who spoke.

This morning, in fact late in the morning, almost early in the afternoon, the Soviet delegate [Vitaliy Ruben] spoke. His speech was loudly acclaimed. The Soviet delegate said: We affirm that no settlement of the Middle East problem can be achieved in the absence of a solution to the Palestinian problem. No chance of success can exist without the unity of all Palestinians. In fact, unity in action remains the most important factor in the liberation struggle at a moment when the PLO is being subjected to imperialist pressure, he said.

The Soviet Union, through the voice of head of state Yuriy Andropov, has already told the Palestinian leaders when they were received there that it would support the Palestinian people until they recovered their legitimate rights. It is a sacred, universal duty. Moreover, he said, the Soviet Union in all international meetings and organizations is asking for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and also from Lebanon.

Answering him, PNC Speaker Khalid al-Fahum -- reelected as you all know -- told the Soviet representative that the PLO places its trust in the Soviet Union, which has always backed the people's liberation struggles and the Palestinian people.

We may have the opportunity in later bulletins to tell you about the political report, if it has been read by then; if not, we shall meet again tomorrow morning.

Qaddumi Submits 'Political Report'

LD160652 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] Participants in the session of the PNC will resume their work at 1000 today. Their meeting last night went on until a late hour. It was learned that the head of the PLO Political Department, Faruq Qaddumi, submitted to the council last night his political report which included an examination of the state of the PLO and the international situation before and during the Zionist invasion of Lebanon and the aims of this invasion, which was planned by Israel and the United States.

It was also learned that Faruq Qaddumi reviewed the various Arab attitudes toward the Israeli aggression. He called on the Palestinians to learn a lesson from the aggression and formulate a new plan which takes into account the consolidation of unity and the strengthening of resistance inside the occupied territories and adherence to the principle of democracy. This is because, as he pointed out, other battles against the Zionist entity are awaiting the Palestinians, who will continue the struggle until final victory is achieved.

SAWT ASH-SHA'B on 'Final Statement'

JN160758 Amman SAWT ASH-SHA'B in Arabic 16 Feb 83 pp 1, 16

[Dispatch by SAWT ASH-SHA'B team in Algiers]

[Excerpts] Leading Palestinian sources have affirmed to SAWT ASH-SHA'B that the PNC will give the PLO leadership, under 'Arafat, flexibility in political movement to guarantee the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. During the PNC debates, the opposition by some resistance factions which signed the Tripoli statement has abated.

SAWT ASH-SHA'B has learned that the political statement which will be released by the PNC will give the PLO unlimited and unrestricted authorization to carry out political moves compatible with the interests of the Palestinian people.

SAWT ASH-SHA'B also learned that the final statement will approve the establishment of a confederation with Jordan. The same sources hinted that 'Arafat's opening speech is in line with the expected statement. In his speech 'Arafat emphasized the issue of confederation and did not reject the Reagan plan, but merely said that the plan does not achieve the Palestinian people's goals.

Khalil al-Wazir, alias Abu Jihad, has affirmed to SAWT ASH-SHA'B that all members of the drafting committee hold identical views with regard to relations with Jordan, relations with the Egyptian people, and the Fes summit resolutions. Abu Jihad said all attempts to cast doubt on Palestinian unity and the PLO's sole status in representing the Palestinian people have failed, as have the obstacles which some Arab countries, including Libya, had created to block the convening of the PNC.

Khalil al-Wazir Comments

LD160136 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Abu Jihad [Khalil al-Wazir] has held a news conference at the Aures hotel. Ahmad 'Abd ar-Rahman, the PNC official spokesman, as well as national and international newsmen attended. At the conference Abu Jihad answered a number of questions concerning progress of the PNC session, the Palestinian accord, the assigning of political power to the new Palestinian leadership, and the Palestinian leadership's stand on the Reagan plan.

Answering these questions, Abu Jihad said: As revolutionaries, we are always optimistic. As you previously observed at the opening of the conference, we talked about all of the Palestinian groups; particularly about the issue of Palestinian unity with all other groups. We still stress this.

On the other hand, Abu Jihad explained: We have achieved a unified result, which is that the Palestinian groups remain united as one. As for rumors about differences, Abu Jihad said: You will see that there is unanimity concerning all of the points raised. Concerning rumors that some Palestinain elements walked out of the meeting, he said that this did not happen. Indeed, all have participated in a normal way.

He said the five-member drafting committee will submit its report within the next 24 hours.

Concerning Sharon's removal from his post, Abu Jihad affirmed that this does not change the enemy's policy because in reality he was not expelled; he has taken up the post of minister of state. Also, he is still one of Begin's primary advisers. He explained that the responsibility is borne by all of the Israeli leaders, and not simply by this or that government. The Sabra and Shatila tragedy, the aggression against Lebanon, and other crimes are the best examples of this.

AFP Reports Press Conference

NC152102 Paris AFP in English 2045 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Algiers, Feb 15 (AFP) -- The United States pledged before the Beirut massacres to protect Palestinian civilians in Lebanon, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) spokesman said here today.

Khalid al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), chief aide to PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat, made the statement today commenting on the four-day meeting preparing yesterday's 16th session of the Palestinian National Council (parliament).

Expressing doubts about any possible U.S. guarantees for the respect of basic Palestinian rights, Mr al-Wazir said:

"We are about to publish documents by Philip Habib, President Reagan's emissary in the Middle East, guaranteeing the security of the Palestinian civilian population if the Palestinian forces withdrew from Beirut.

"After the Shatila and Sabra massacres, what guarantees can the United States still give us on our future?"

The Palestinian leadership remains divided over the Reagan peace plan for the Middle East, he said, but the leadership had agreed on:

1) The question of establishing a Jordanian-Palestinian federation;

2) PLO relations with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria;

3) The Fes summit peace plan.

On the Reagan plan, Mr al-Wazir said, "Some want to reject it, others wonder how to deal with it."

Mr al-Wazir denied reports of a scuffle here involving Mr 'Arafat and other Palestinian leaders. He also denied rumors that PLO minority leaders had withdrawn from the meeting.

"All the leaders took part in all the sessions, which unfolded normally in a good atmosphere," he said.

Meanwhile, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader George Habbash said in an interview for French radio that all Palestinian organisations "are agreed to continue armed struggle."

"What happened in Beirut," he said, "clearly shows that our military option is our fundamental option."

SAUDI ARABIA

COMMENTARY ON IMPORTANCE OF PNC MEETINGS

Radio 'News Analysis'

GF141845 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 14 Feb 83

["News analysis" by 'Abdallah Sulayman al-Khurayyif]

[Text] The meetings of the 16th session of the Palestine National Council [PNC] will begin in the Algerian capital today. This is the 16th session it has held since it was formed in 1964.

Political observers attach great significance to the results of this session, particularly at this crucial stage in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is of interest to political observers because the PNC is the highest Palestinian legislative body and includes cadres and sectors authorized to act in the interest of Palestinian rights and the fulfillment of the Palestinian people's aspirations and expectations. It also plans and channels Palestinian action and defines the PLO's policy.

Since its formation, the PNC has succeeded in crystallizing Palestinian military and political action, has established a dialogue to regulate relations among the various Palestinian national forces and has assimilated these forces in the receptacle of the PLO, which is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the only one authorized to speak on their behalf and call for their historical legitimate rights.

The unification of the Palestinian resistance factions and the organization of their armed struggle led to the reinforcement of international support for Palestinian rights and to more national gains. This has given the PLO the strength to enter various international forums and achieve more than political and diplomatic gains.

This session is also significant because of the determination of the PNC members -- as its spokesman said -- to ensure its success and make resolutions that will solidify the Palestinian people's struggle to wrest their national right to return, to self-determination, and to establish their independent state on their national soil.

The PNC will surely adopt resolutions commensurate with the current stage of the Middle East issue, the crux of which is the Palestinian cause. If Palestinian national unity meant a Palestinian demand in the past, it is now a dire need, for which there is no alternative. All have agreed on this in the meetings which preceded the PNC meetings because the conflict with the Israeli enemy requires political and military strength and most of the members believe that national unity is the only way to achieve this in a way that ensures a successful Palestinian action on the road to independence for the Palestinian people and the restoration of their usurped rights.

Papers View PNC Meetings

LD151112 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0745 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Riyadh, 15 Feb (SPA) -- The Saudi paper AL-BILAD comments today on the PNC meetings in Algiers. It writes that the first indications emerging from these meetings give a well-defined picture of the dimensions of the Palestine method of action and of its positive and interactive political movements during the coming period, which is the most important militarily and politically in the history of the Palestine struggle.

The paper states that there are five basic issues facing the PNC that crystallize the concept behind the view of events that the Palestinian people's leaders hold. The paper affirms that the Arab peace plan occupies the primary place among these issues.

The paper adds that these PNC meetings come amid great Arab optimism concerning the important achievements that the council hopes to attain to assert the role of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination.

The paper concludes that the PNC today represents the conscience of the entire Palestinian people, and consequently its moves and methods will constitute the backbone for any action based on clear objectives and methods to be pursued for the establishment of Arab stances and to provide support for the Palestinian people represented by the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestine people.

The newspaper AL-YAWM also expressed the hope that the PNC meetings will end with a serious agreement on the Arab peace plan adopted at the Fes Arab summit conference so that the future political line of the Palestine resistance can center strongly on the Fes resolutions as a wide base for effective and strong action.

UAE

FINANCE MINISTER DISCUSSES EFFECTS OF OIL CRISIS

GF150852 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0700 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] Dubayy, 16 Feb (WAKH) -- Shaykh Hamdan ibn Rashid, UAE finance, industry, economy, and trade minister, has announced that the effects of the oil crisis, which the world is currently suffering from, are still within the control of the UAE. He added that he does not expect acute reflections of this crisis on the budget of his country this year.

In an interview with UAE paper AL-BAYAN published today, he noted that despite the oil market crisis, the UAE's revenues are still sufficient to meet the needs of development in accordance with the rules that guide expenditures. The UAE minister noted that there is a need to reach a balance between the state's revenues and expenditures. He ruled out the possibility of the imposition of income taxes to make up for the drop in oil revenues.

Answering a question as to whether the oil market crisis will affect the UAE's foreign aid, Shaykh Hamdan said: The UAE provided, in the past, aid that exceeded the aid granted by other countries. He added that it is time to review the size of this aid so that the financial capability of the UAE and national affiliation can be taken into consideration.

On his views regarding the oil crisis he said: The current crisis will remain acute for at least 6 months. The UAE minister attributed the main cause of the oil crisis to the fact that the oil-producing countries have increased their production to an average that exceeds 3 times their needs which has led to an increase in the amount of oil available on the international market. Shaykh Hamdan warned against the continuation of the current oil crisis and the lack of a unified policy for production, because this will lead to the collapse of OPEC.

Concluding his interview Shaykh Hamdan called on the OPEC members to avert the hazards to which OPEC is being subjected and avert the dangers that may affect their oil and financial revenues.

AL-BAZ WARNS OF POSSIBLE MIDEAST EXPLOSION

NC152054 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpts] Paris, 15 Feb (MENA) -- Dr Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of President Husni Mubarak's office for political affairs, warned today that a serious explosion will take place in the Middle East within months if the present situation continues.

In an interview to be published tomorrow by the Paris-based, Arabic language magazine KUL AL-'ARAB, Dr al-Baz says that President Husni Mubarak's visit to the United States achieved the purpose for which the president made the trip, which was to draw the attention of the U.S. Administration to the need to bring about Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon as soon as possible and to start serious and effective peace negotiations to find a just and honorable solution to the Palestinian problem as well as to stress the importance of the time element.

Dr al-Baz said that the Americans gave President Mubarak a promise to work for the unity of Lebanon and to enable the legal Lebanese authority to exercise its jurisdiction in full. Dr al-Baz also said that the Egyptian side pointed out to the U.S. side that "the temporary solution of the Beirut problem must not remove us from the fact that the Palestinian problem is getting more complicated day after day and remains an urgent and hot problem. In our opinion, the United States will encourage the prospects of peace through its links with the area."

Dr al-Baz affirmed that Egypt is not against Soviet interests and effective participation in finding a settlement.

On the contrary, we cannot deny that the Soviet Union is an important and influential international party.

In his interview with KUL AL-'ARAB magazine, Dr al-Baz focused in particular on the results of President Mubarak's recent visit to Washington. He affirmed that the visit achieved the purpose for which President Mubarak made the trip, which was to draw the attention of the U.S. Administration to the need to bring about an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon as soon as possible and to start serious and effective peace negotiations to find a just and honorable solution to the Palestinian problem.

Dr al-Baz said that the Egyptian side told U.S. officials that the continuation of the present situation in the Middle East, even for a few more months [words indistinct] is totally unacceptable, and [words indistinct] the situation to the stage of serious explosion as far as the area and the world are concerned. This will introduce many [word indistinct] and international factors, making it absolutely difficult to continue the peace process and to achieve some kind of necessary stability [words indistinct] in the interests of the Arab nation and the whole world.

Dr al-Baz pointed out that the Egyptian side also conveyed to the U.S. Administration its impressions about the Palestinian stand.

He said: The PLO's position supports peace and is moderate. The Palestinian leadership is undertaking coordination with Jordan to arrive at a formula to enable the Arabs to proceed collectively toward peace with Israel, and this could result in the achievement of the Arab right.

He added: We told the U.S. Administration that the PLO has done all that it could be asked to do, and that, particularly after the bloody events in Lebanon, it cannot do more than this in view of Israeli extremism and Israel's maintaining its rejectionist position.

He affirmed that the U.S. side showed understanding of the moderate trend inside the PLO. He pointed out that the PLO leadership showed a great deal of flexibility and moderation in the way it dealt with the question of the departure from Beirut. Furthermore, the positions and statements of the PLO leadership since that time have mostly been positive.

Dr al-Baz said that the Egyptian side expalined to the U.S. side that the PLO leadership cannot relinquish the rights of the Palestinian people.

He said: Unless a U.S. approach is made toward peace and unless the United States is able to persuade Israel to respond or at least to start movement on the way that could lead to a just settlement acceptable to the Palestinians and the Arabs, the moderate trend inside the PLO could end and the moderate leaders will by necessity change their views and the peace movement in this stage will weaken.

Asked about the U.S. Administration's opinion on the "lukewarm" Egyptian-Israeli relations, Dr al-Baz said that the United States thinks that any aggravation in Egyptian-Israeli relations will be reflected negatively on Israel's position on the Lebanese and Palestinian issues.

He said in this regard: We have often made it clear to the U.S. Administration that we are committed to peace not as a legal matter but because we believe that this is the best way to deal with the situation resulting from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Dr al-Baz affirmed that Egypt's relations with Israel are not special but ordinary and that what applies to Egypt's relations with the other states applies to these relations.

Asked whether Egypt is satisfied with the Palestinian-Jordanian coordination, Dr al-Baz said: We think that it is necessary to maintain this Jordanian-Palestinian coordination, because we suffered in the past from a lack of coordination in the Arab position.

He added: In this stage, we think that Jordanian-Palestinian coordination is more vital than at any time before, because we are embarking on a specific and delicate stage that could be decisive. This coordination must lead to the formulation of a specific Arab position with which we can enter the negotiations. In this regard, we must not allow any side to deal with the Arabs separately, but there must be Jordanian-Palestinian coordination. [passage indistinct]

AL-BAZ REPORTS ON MUBARAK-NUMAYRI MEETING

NC141655 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1610 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Text] Aswan, 14 Feb (MENA) -- Presidents Muhammad Husni Mubarak and Ja'far Muhammad Numayri this morning met in Aswan, where they held a 3-hour meeting. Following the meeting, Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and head of the presidential office for political affairs, said that the two presidents discussed what has been achieved in the field of integration so that both countries can start the stage of [word indistinct]. He said that both presidents agreed [words indistinct] the meeting of the Higher Integration Council next week. He said that both presidents have made the necessary decisions [words indistinct] forming the federal parliament and other bodies regarding stimulating the work of both the integration fund and the executive bodies.

Al-Baz further said that there is a tendency to increase the resources available to the fund. He said: We have held contacts with several international bodies both in the United States and Europe.

There are also some Arab offers to participate in the integration process. He added: We believe that there are good opportunities and that there are several projects other than land reclamation, which is one of the development aspects, and there are other projects under discussion. The discussions of these projects will be completed within 2 months, after which we will proceed to the stage of ensuring the necessary remittances and then start implementation.

Dr al-Baz said: The implementation of the Jonglei Canal project has made good progress and is being carried out by some French companies. We hope that work on this project will be completed as soon as possible, because it will produce good results and increase the cultivated land, promote the method of cultivation and irrigation, and many other things.

Dr al-Baz said that the two presidents reviewed current Arab affairs, foremost of which were the situation in Lebanon, the Iraqi-Iranian war, and the comprehensive settlements efforts.

He added: We are in agreement, and our policy is firm. Events are constantly proving the soundness of the line which we have followed, because it is a national line stemming from objective principles. We and Sudan are both in the same trench on the side of the supreme Arab interest.

Dr al-Baz said: The two presidents also dealt with the current efforts to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and to start negotiations to achieve a sort of transitional or interim arrangement in the West Bank and Gaza.

He added that the two presidents also reviewed the situation on the Iraqi-Iranian front. He said: A date for another meeting between the two presidents will be decided next week. This meeting will include ministerial and parliamentary committees with the aim of giving strong momentum to the integration efforts.

Sudanese President Ja'far Numayri arrived at Aswan airport at 1045 today. He was welcomed at the airport by President Husni Mubarak, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan 'Ali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Butrus Ghali, Secretary General of the Presidency 'Izz ad-Din Mukhtar, Foreign Ministry First Under Secretary and director of the president's office for political affairs Dr Usamah al-Baz and Aswan Governor Shawqi al-Mutayni.

GHALI GIVES MUBARAK REPORT ON RECENT ARAB TOUR

NC111406 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1245 GMT 11 Feb 83

[Text] Cairo, 11 Feb (MENA) -- Dr Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, said he presented to President Husni Mubarak today a detailed and comprehensive report on the mission he and Dr Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and chief of the presidential office for political affairs, had in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon.

He said the report covered the talks held between them and Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, particularly on the coordination between the two countries in relation to the Nonaligned Movement and the next summit conference which will be held in New Delhi on 7 March, as well as the coordination between the two countries in relation to certain Arab questions.

He added that the visit to Jordan and Lebanon was within the framework of the coordination and consultation between the two countries in relation to the developments in the situation in the area.

Dr Ghali added: We have affirmed to the Lebanese side Egypt's stand based on the importance of safeguarding national unity and cohesion among the people of Lebanon and the importance of speeding up the withdrawal of foreign forces and of safeguarding Lebanon's sovereignty and security on every inch of its territory.

Chali said the report he submitted to President Mubarak also contains the text of the two letters which Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil asked them to convey.

Answering a question by MENA whether this visit also meant the restoration of diplomatic relations soon between Egypt and Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan, Ghali said: The present actual bilateral relations in various fields between Egypt and each of these states is more important than other formalities.

He added: We have also affirmed to the Iraqi side Egypt's support to safeguard its territory against foreign aggression. Concluding his statement Dr Ghali said: We have agreed to maintain constant coordination among us on all issues of mutual interest.

Dr Ghali and Dr al-Baz were delegated by President Husni Mubarak during the past 2 days to tour the three states to deliver messages from President Mubarak to the head of state of these countries.

'ALI SENDS LETTERS TO U.S., EUROPEAN MINISTERS

NC151730 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan 'Ali today sent letters to the foreign ministers of the United States and a number of European states.

Our correspondent has learned that the letters contain Egypt's appraisal of the serious situation in southern Lebanon and Egypt's demand [mutalabat] to all parties that they stop any operations aimed at intimidating the Palestinians in Lebanon.

On the other hand, Egypt has asked its permanent delegation to the United Nations to deposit the statement which Kamal Hasan 'Ali made at the People's Assembly yesterday, particularly the part in which he defines Egypt's stance on Lebanon, as a United Nations document.

AL-AHRAM ON KAHAN COMMISSION, PNC MEETING

NC160750 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0622 GMT 16 Feb 83

[From the press review]

[Text] AL-AHRAM points out that the Israeli leadership's actual objective for announcing the Kahan commission recommendations 1 week earlier than scheduled is to hamper the meetings of the Palestine National Council currently being held in Algiers and to create perplexity and perhaps a split in its ranks.

In its editorial the newspaper says that the early announcement of the denunciation of Israeli Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon over the massacre of Palestinians in Beirut is aimed at attempting to foil the resolutions of the Palestine National Council through creating an atmosphere of distortion, perplexity, and split between the extremist and moderate Palestinians.

In this respect, the newspaper points out that the expansionist Israeli leadership is living on Arab extremism rather than on Arab rationalism, a fact which banishes the idea that the objective behind the early announcement of Kahan's report is to encourage the rational Palestinians, as this is not included in the vocabulary of Israeli extremism.

PRESIDENT ISSUES OPEN LETTER TO IRANIANS

JN151933 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1603 GMT 15 Feb 83

["Text" of 15 February open letter from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to Iranian people and army -- read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Before and during the war, we have addressed open letters to the Iranian rulers through diplomatic and nondiplomatic channels calling on them not to give in to evil inclinations and the schemes and interests of the foreigner who incites them to carry out aggression against Iraq. The latest of these open letters was the statement we made which was carried by INA prior to the recent abortive Iranian offensive on our territory. In all these letters, we have reiterated the call for averting aggression and proceeding on the course of peace to stop the bloodshed and heal the wounds so that they will not negatively affect the present or future relationship between the two neighbor countries.

From a basic standpoint and irrespective of everything and all the bitterness that has resulted from the hostile course of the Iranian regime against our country, we say that we have sought through all means to explain the dangers of this hostile course and to call for peace out of a sense of responsibility and a sound awareness of the geographic and other factors which emphasize that Iraq and Iran are two neighbor countries, a fact which neither of them can ignore at present or in the future, and that Iraq cannot dissociate itself from this reality or remove itself to another place, far away from this geographic reality.

All these attempts, however, have failed. The reason for this failure is inherent in your regime's hostile and backward outlook and the evil motives of some of its elements which have implicitly or directly become connected to the foreigner. This resulted in the tragic state of affairs of the recent offensive against our country which led to the deaths of thousands of Iranians without any useful results for the present and the future of the Iranian people.

We state that after the failure of all our attempts with your rulers it has become necessary for us, for the considerations that we have mentioned and for other considerations, to address you directly through this letter to say that every Iranian, regardless of his position and whether he hates us and our regime or not, is called upon to ask himself: On what bases am I continuing the war which brings losses and ruin to Iran?

We are confident that the answer to this question, if made far from the buffooneries, slander, and lies of the rulers, will make you admit the logical result that the Iranian people and army have no interest in this war which your rulers seek to prolong.

The Iranian rulers may tell you -- and they have publicly told you before and during the war -- that Iran is an Islamic country dutybound to liberate Iraq to have it become an Islamic state like itself. We want to discuss this dictum with an open mind, to say that the era of invasions has gone; it will not return. International public opinion rejects in words and deeds the expansion of any country at the expense of other countries and the redrawing of countries' political maps. Expansion, even by the big powers which possess greater potentials and have wider influence than Iran, takes place under various covers and not by the same method that the Iranian rulers are following.

Despite all this, the chances of success of such an expansion have largely diminished in this era. Anyone who adopts such a method at present will face total opposition by the peoples in this world and will place himself in a very serious dilemma from which he can extricate himself only by really turning away from these methods.

If this is the case with regard to the designs of the big powers which believe in expansion, how can we expect Iran to be able to carry them out when its potentials are far less than those of the big powers?

Your ignorant rulers have told you that the Iranian people were able to depose the shah of Iran, who had been backed by the United States, and therefore can defeat the Iraqis on their soil. You must tell them, regardless of anybody's intentions, that the shah was an Iranian ruler; that the Iranian people rebelled against him for well-known reasons; and that this method cannot be applied to topple the Iraqi regime because the great Iraqi people and the brave Iraqi Army are nationally and spiritually tied to their soil, history, and leadership.

If some have been under the illusion that they could apply this method, we tell them that the experiences of the past 3 years of war -- particularly the attempts to penetrate our borders during the battles east of Basra, Mandali, and Maysan, including the recent battles in Maysan -- must have revealed the entire logical truth.

Your rulers may tell you that our regime is isolated from the people. This fact facilitiates their aggression against and covetousness in Iraq. But the Iranians must ask themselves whether what their rulers are saying is true or not. If true, why hasn't our regime been toppled although the war is now in its 3d year? Who has been fighting the aggressors these 3 years? Isn't it the Iraqi people? If the Iraqi people and army were not satisfied with their regime, they would not have adopted the stand that many of you have witnessed in the battlefield.

Let us presume the relationship between our regime and our people was not so strong and glorious as it is in reality. We still ask who has authorized your rulers to change the political conditions in a neighboring country whose constitution says that Islam is the religion of the state and which applies the spirit and justice of Islam to the details of the daily life in the country. Even if the Iraqi people were not satisfied with their regime, they would still reject authorizing or deputizing Iran to save them from this regime because our people have throughout history taught many other peoples how they should reject injustice and humiliation. The Iraqi people are always capable of revolting against any regime they are (?not satisfied with). The Iraqi people did this in the modern history at least 20 years before the new Iranian rulers assumed power.

Why, then, do the Iranian rulers insist on humiliating the Iraqi people and on (?continuing to shed the Iranian people's blood)? [words indistinct] We are certain that the number of good and alert persons is increasing among the Iranians and that they possess clear answers to these questions.

Furthermore, what commodity do the Iranian rulers want to export to Iraq and the region? Isn't it the same commodity these rulers are now using in Iran and with which they are dealing with the Iranian people? Isn't it that same stagnant commodity which has destroyed Iran and filled Iranian prisons with sons of the Iranian people who played an active role in deposing the shah? Is this commodity better than those which have led the various nationalities in Iran toward a critical and tragic situation? Or is it better than the commodity rejected by the men of religion, mujtahidun, and mukhallidun [authorized religious theologians] in Iran? If this is the case, how could any person -- regardless of his own judgment -- believe that the commodity rejected by an integral part of the Iranian people can be accepted by the Iraqis and the other peoples in the region, particularly if this stagnant commodity comes through means or arms and occupation?

Islam is the last of the heavenly religions and Prophet Muhammad is the seal of prophets and holy messengers. This means that the believers' ability to face life is better than it was before Islam. Thus how can the Iranian rulers deny the right of the peoples of Iraq and the region to choose their own way of dealing with life? Why do they insist on exporting an aggressive and backward commodity to us at a time when it is being largely rejected by many militant factions inside Iran to the extent of resorting to arms in order to face it?

Gentlemen, your regime is living on war and on the continuation of war. This is why it has been rejecting all international attempts, including the Islamic states' attempts, to stop the war and to make the warring parties respect each other's right to live, to choose their own path, and preserve their security and sovereignty. Your regime is now convinced of the analysis by certain circles and observers that stopping the war will make it incapable of answering people's questions about the internal situation and of tackling and solving Iran's problems. It seems the Iranian regime cannot deal with the Iranian people except through crises. We are, however, certain that the continuation of the war will land this regime in a tragic state which the regime thinks it can avoid through war. Iran will lose much more than it has already lost. To end the war means to spare Iranian blood, to grant Iran the chance to rebuild itself, and to enable Iran to preserve its wealth which is being dissipated by the continuation of the war. Millions of Iranians in exile and those who cannot find a means for their livelihood will not find solutions for their predicament in the continuation of war. Their predicament can be solved through peace. They will otherwise live in desperation and die.

By yielding to the orders of your rulers, you are contravening the Islamic faith because you are not only attacking a neighboring state and violating the Prophet's tenets which say take care of thy neighbor and then of they brother, but also attacking the land of the holy places and the tombs of Imam 'Ali and our lord and grandfather Husayn and the tombs of our great forefathers. This land is not only defended by the Iraqis who are sacrificing their lives for it, but is also defended by the divine will. Almighty God is on the side of right against wrong, against aggressors and on the side of the victims of aggression. God will bless those who defend the holy land and not those who invade it as aggressors.

Your rulers have been under the illusion that our call for peace stemmed from a position of weakness. They have made a great blunder. We have always been acting out of our responsibility toward all peoples of the world and toward our great Iraqi people. We call for peace. We understand that the continuation of the war will deepen our wounds and will make us remember old wounds. This will result in heavy damage to the relations between the people of Iran and the Iraqi people. Our call for peace stems from these considerations and not from any of the considerations which misled and continue to mislead the Iranian rulers, who continue to fall in the abyss of foolish behavior and ideas. The Iraqi people can be as delicate as the petals of a rose. At the same time, we are very strong. We are as sharp as Dhu al-Fiqar, the sword of our grandfather Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him. The ambitions of Khomeyni and his henchmen are doomed to failure. The land of An-Najaf and Karbala' will remain far from the feet of the invaders. Iraqi soil will remain proud and chaste.

In this letter we find it our responsibility to explain important facts to the Iranian people and army. We want to contribute, as we have done in the past, to stopping the bloodshed and ending ruin and destruction. We hope everyone will realize these facts and avoid any other adventure in the Maysan sector and other sectors, on the Ash-Shib axis, or on other axes, because the expansionist invaders will meet with worse and more bitter fates than the fate which thousands of Iranians have met. The Iranian rulers who push these Iranians to their death do not care one iota for their people.

Peace be upon those who want and believe in peace. God is great. May God support our intentions.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, 15 February 1983

COMMUNIQUE ON 14-15 FEB WAR OPERATIONS

JN151810 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Communique No 1001 issued by Iraqi Armed Forces General Command on 15 February]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

With high morale and great enthusiasm, the brave fighters of Saddam's Al-Qadisiyah battle are continuing their legitimate defense of the country and their epoch-making operations against the Qom and Tehran ruling clique of rancor and tyranny. The results for last night and today are as follows:

1. Our forward units attacked with various weapons an enemy concentration in front of our positions in the Maysan sector, killing 29 and destroying 1 vehicle and 1 observation post. Two enemy soldiers and one serviceable armored personnel carrier were captured in this sector.

2. An enemy force came close to the positions of our units in the central sector of the front. Our units attacked it with various weapons and forced it to flee after suffering four soldiers killed and a number of soldiers wounded. The enemy also suffered three soldiers killed and one vehicle destroyed in this sector.

3. The spiteful Iranian regime's artillery today shelled Basra and Mandali and their suburbs, causing some damage in their civilian installations.

[Signed] The Armed Forces General Command, 15 February 1983

MILITARY SPOKESMAN DENIES TWO PLANES DOWNED

JN151838 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1805 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Baghdad, 15 Feb (INA) -- An Iraqi military spokesman denied here today reports about downing two Iraqi planes. In a statement to INA tonight, the spokesman said Iran's announcement in its communique No 1220 alleging that its artillery shot down two Iraqi planes is absolutely baseless.

The spokesman challenged the Iranian regime to show any tangible evidence of its false claims, affirming that the Iraqi planes [word indistinct] have not carried any activities [word indistinct] today.

FORCES BEAT OFF NEW IRANIAN OFFENSIVE

JN161034 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1025 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Feb (INA) -- A military spokesman today announced that an abortive Iranian offensive against an Iraqi brigade in the Ash-Shib area in the Maysan operational sector was beaten off and destroyed.

The spokesman said the Iranian enemy carried out a new desperate attempt against one of the Iraqi brigades in the Ash-Shib area. The brave Iraqi units succeeded in beating off and destroying th offensive, inflicting losses in life and equipment. A number of enemy personnel we .aken prisoner and the rest took to their heels.

SADDAM TO MAKE 'URGENT' VISIT TO CAIRO

GF151656 Kuwait AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 14 Feb 83 p 1

[Correspondent's dispatch from Cairo]

[Excerpt] In a new development in Egyptian-Iraqi contacts, informed sources have affirmed to AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn is preparing for an urgent 1-day working visit to Cairo during which he will meet with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The talks will concentrate on the Iraqi-Iranian war, particularly ideas on ending it.

The sources told AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM that Mubarak will probably visit Baghdad to back Iraq in its war with Iran. The sources affirmed that King Husayn will be present for part of the Mubarak-Saddam meetings.

PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES 15 FEB

JN152055 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2045 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Baghdad, 15 Feb (INA) -- Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Khan arrived here from Amman tonight on a visit to Iraq.

Speaking to an INA correspondent, Khan said his talks with Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz will deal with regional and international issues, developments in the region, and bilateral relations. He added that his visit will help to further bolster the relations of friendship between Iraq and Pakistan.

FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER RAMADAN VISITS TURKEY

For Ankara Domestic coverage of First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan's visit to Turkey, see the Turkey section of the 16 February Western Europe Daily Report and subsequent issues.

PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUES ACTIVITIES

Meeting With Foreign Minister

JN151814 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Foreign Affairs Minister Marwan al-Qasim received in his office today Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Ali Khan and his delegation.

Al-Qasim explained to the Pakistani minister the measures being carried out by the Israeli occupation authorities to devour the occupied Arab territories and empty them of their inhabitants. Al-Qasim also explained the seriousness and importance of the time factor which Israel is exploiting to implement its plans and foil all efforts being exerted to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement of the conflict in the region.

Al-Qasim also explained Jordanian efforts to coordinate with the PLO, hoping that the meetings of the Palestine National Council currently being held in Algiers will lead to support of the joint Palestinian-Jordanian march to liberate the land and save it from the annexation, devouring, and settlement plans.

The Pakistani minister praised these moves and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for all these efforts.

Holds Press Conference

JN152050 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Khan has spoken highly of His Majesty King Husayn, his role in serving peace objectives, his patronage of Arab causes, and his persistent efforts to serve these just causes.

Speaking in a press conference this afternoon, Sahabazada Khan stated that his country has exerted and still is exerting all its efforts to serve the just Arab causes.

On President Reagan's initiative to solve the Middle East crisis, he said that it constitutes a change in U.S. policy and exceeds former ones. He indicated that through its continued contacts with U.S. Administration his country underlines the importance of recognizing the Palestinian people's legitimate rights.

Replying to a question on developments of the Afghan issue, Sahabzada Khan said that there have been several indirect contacts in this regard sponsored by the United Nations. He hoped that these contacts would succeed. Khan added that his country sees that any settlement to this issue must secure the Soviet forces' withdrawal from Afghanistan and the return of 3 million Afghan refugees now residing in Pakistan.

Khan added that Soviet officials have voiced readiness to withdraw from Afghanistan. The Pakistani minister hoped that this withdrawal would be soon.

Concluding, he thanked Jordanian officials for their hospitality and for giving him the opportunity to meet King Husayn. The minister hoped that bilateral cooperation would be further promoted to serve the interests of the two peoples.

AMMAN DAILY ON PNC SESSION, REAGAN PLAN

JN151200 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 0500 GMT 15 Feb 83

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "The Crucial Decision," the newspaper AR-RA'Y writes: Yesterday the Palestine National Council [PNC] began a session during which it has to deal with important tasks, foremost of which is the task of saving the land and kinfolk across the river. Needless to say, this session does not derive its importance from drawing comparisons between the various proposed peace plans, because the Arab peace plan is indisputably the best in terms of content. Therefore, the PNC will most probably approve it.

In light of this conception, this session is important because the political decision to be taken by the council on either to accept or reject the proposed U.S. efforts -- represented in Reagan's initiative -- as a means to save the land and kinfolk. In other words, this decision will mean accepting or rejecting putting this initiative to the test. Although it is taken for granted that Reagan's initiative does not rise to the level of the Arab peace plan in terms of content, it presumably has implementation power deriving from President Reagan's pledges to use all his influence to implement it, especially since the United States is the source of power on which Israel relies.

AR-RA'Y adds: It is true that since the announcement of the initiative Israel has challenged and rejected it and stepped up its settlement practices in the occupied territory to prove to the Arabs that the U.S. Administration is unable to carry out its initiative. Despite this, the U.S. Administration assumes that it is still waiting for the Palestinian reply to it. Therefore, the PNC should decide which plan is more useful as a means to save the land and kinfolk across the river. By rejecting the initiative, the PNC will relieve the U.S. Administration of having to prove its credibility toward the initiative. Or it will leave the door open and authorize the Palestinian leadership to put the initiative to the test. This will compel the U.S. Administration either to prove its credibility and ability to confront the Israeli challenge to its initiative or retreat and prove that it was not serious when it announced the initiative.

In any case, a new state of affairs will be created. Either the peace march will move forward or the U.S. peace role in the region will finally fall, thus allowing no one to claim that the Arabs rejected a peace opportunity or initiative to save their land and kinfolk.

The newspaper concludes: Hence we see how crucial the decision the PNC faces and how much it needs enlightenment and responsibility.

KING TO VISIT ROMANIA, SFRY 17 FEB

JN152012 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] A responsible source at the Royal Hashemite Court has stated that, at the invitation of His Excellency Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and the SFRY State Presidency, His Majesty King Husayn will on 17 February begin a visit of several days to the Socialist Republic of Romania and SFRY. His majesty will hold talks with his excellency the Romanian president and His Excellency Petar Stambolic, president of the SFRY state presidency. His majesty will be accompanied by a delegation of high-level officials.

ARMY DEPLOYMENT CARRIED OUT IN GREATER BEIRUT

No Significant Incidents Reported

NC151237 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpt] At noon today, we received the following communique from the Army command: The deployment of Lebanese Army units in specified positions has been carried out in accordance with the instructions of the operation's commander under the greater Beirut plan. There were no significant incidents. The Army deployment has met with satisfaction everywhere.

The Lebanese Army therefore concluded its deployment in greater Beirut today in accordance with the plan. The operation started at about 0130. Some reports said U.S., French, and Italian units of the multinational force will join the Army during the next 48 hours.

Al-Jumayyil Inspects Army Positions

NC151701 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1515 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] President Amin al-Jumayyil this afternoon inspected the positions where units of the Lebanese Army were stationed in greater Beirut.

Army Command Statement

NC151754 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] The Army command issued the following a short time ago:

Lebanese Army forces have completed their deployment in the various areas in implementation of the charted plan with a view to establishing the legitimate authority in the city of Beirut to combat actions that disturb security and order and prevent all armed manifestations. The Army has set up checkposts to seize contraband and operated patrols to maintain security and reassure the citizens. The operation was carried out without an incident. The Army is continuing to implement its task in accordance with the charted plan and with sufficient forces.

The Army command reminds that the Army commander can take all measures that will preserve security on the basis of Legislative Decree Number 10 of 14 February 1983, especially searching for and confiscating arms and ammunition, searching buildings and other places at any time after the approval of the military public prosecution, observing the ports and ships in territorial waters, observing foreigners' entry into and exit from Lebanon, banning public meetings that disturb security or that are of a military nature, pursuing those who disturb security and referring them to the military judiciary within 5 days from the day they are detained, and combatting smuggling. By a decision from the Army commander, all those who commit actions that disturb security and the contraventions mentioned above shall be referred to the military courts. The Army command emphasizes to the citizens that they must carry their identity cards at all times.

Armed Manifestations Disappear

NC160830 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Excerpt] The Lebanese Army deployment has not been extended to include the Al-Jumhur area, which is within the boundaries of greater Beirut, pending the outcome of contacts to eliminate any problems that may arise because the Israeli forces are using this road.

In West Beirut, the Army has reinforced its positions which had been taken over upon the Israeli withdrawal after its incursion into the capital.

The Army command said that the deployment took place without any significant incidents. The command said the Army's mission is to combat order and security breaches and to prevent all armed manifestations.

It has been observed that armed manifestations have disappeared completely in the eastern sector of the capital and no gunmen or military vehicles have appeared. Armed manifestations have also been removed in front of party centers.

Military sources indicated that today the Army will resume reinforcing its positions and will deploy armored patrols around the clock to maintain security. However, the search for arms and wanted people can take place at any time with the approval of the appropriate public prosecution. This action is not related to the military field of operation.

It has been learned that on Monday the Army will take over the fifth dock in Beirut port and that it will be transferred to the Beirut Port Company after the customs offices have been set up there.

Concerning the multinational force participating with the Lebanese Army, well-informed sources have said that U.S., French, and Italian patrols will be deployed in greater Beirut as of next Monday in coordination with the Army and in accordance with a timetable to ensure the continued presence of these patrols.

Al-Wazzan on Army Deployment

NC151655 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpts] Commenting on today's most important event -- the Lebanese Army's deployment in greater Beirut -- Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan this afternoon said:

[Begin recording] I can say that this operation has thus far been carried out successfully and in accordance with the plan that was drawn up. The Army's deployment began at 0200 today and was completed at 0630 in all the positions designated to it. Thus far, nothing has occurred to impede the Army's deployment. I do not wish to discuss matters that preceded this operation. Certain parties had apparently wanted this operation to be carried out in accordance with the certain considerations, but the Lebanese people, through their awareness, have facilitated this operation. We hope that this awareness and cooperation will continue so that the legitimate authority will assume its responsibilities and so that all of us, in our words and deeds, will be in solidarity and rally around the legitimate authority, which we saw today assuming responsibility in so-called greater Beirut, to enable it to spread out to cover all of Lebanon through our will, perseverence, and vigilance, God willing.

[Question] Mr Prime Minister, there has been some criticism of the application of Legislative Decree No 10. What is your response to this criticism?

[Answer] I believe you mean Decree No 10 itself, because I am not aware of any criticism of the application of the decree. The Army has almost completed its deployment, and there has been no criticism of it. However, I have heard some criticism about Decree No 10 on the grounds that it is an extraordinary measure.

All of us are aware that what is termed as extraordinary is by definition extraordinary. An emergency law is a law for extraordinary situations and contains rules that actually restrict the activities of the citizens and certain sectors. Under the emergency law, this is justified because of the circumstances in which the country or part of it is exposed to danger. Despite this, a state of emergency was not declared during all past periods for reasons that need not be mentioned.

However, we are now embarking on a process of bringing the Lebanese together and of regaining and strengthening the authority so that it will set out from all parts of the capital and its suburbs to spread out and cover all of Lebanon. The authority had to embark on this process through what it has thus far been able to achieve with regard to rebuilding the Army, which had been in a state of which all of you are aware, and through the multinational forces that have been made available to it -- forces which have come from various parts of the world to assist Lebanon. These forces cannot continue to do so unless they see that Lebanon has actually assumed its own responsibilities and is prepared to continue to do so. For this reason, we had to start, and the people have all been insisting that we should start. The Israelis entered the western area [of Beirut] at a certain time, and their entry prompted the acceleration of the Lebanese Army's entry. At that time, I insisted that the Lebanese Army should enter so that the Israeli army would get out. Therefore, this has been all the more reason for us today to expedite the entry of the Lebanese Army into the eastern area as well. This is now known. It has been a national demand, as is the demand that the Army should enter into all the areas after the Israeli army leaves them and after all withdrawals take place so that the Lebanese authorities will regain all their responsibilities.

During the present period and by virtue of their responsibility, the Lebanese officials believed that the Army must have a framework within which to operate. We did not want the Army to operate within the framework of an emergency law because such a law authorizes the apprehension of persons, the impounding of vehicles, and many other things, and the imposition of controls which might not be beneficial in these circumstances and which might not be befitting for the image that we would like in normal circumstances to present with regard to ourselves and the world. Therefore, we had to tailor a framework that meets our actual requirements in the present circumstances -- hence the legislative decree which has been outlined in specific points dealing with the measures that were experienced when the Army entered into the western area.

Lebanon is not the responsibility of the legitimate authority alone; it is a collective Lebanese responsibility. It is the responsibility of all of us. All of us must rally around sound measures so that the Lebanese body and the Lebanese homeland can be sound. [end recording]

Sham'un Welcomes Army Deployment

NC151801 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] In an exclusive statement to our radio, [former] President Camille Sam'un expressed the hope that the army deployment in Beirut stems from a profound Lebanese thinking. He expressed support of the army, in its capacity as a symbol of the legitimacy, which is represented in the president of the republic. He said that this step was expected and that it is a natural move which will enable the army to deploy in all Lebanese areas. He paid tribute to the position of the Lebanese Forces, whose mission is to defend Lebanon against the foreign forces which are present on its territory. According to press reports, President Sham'un will leave for Cairo on Thursday on an official 5-day visit.

HADDAD'S FORCES TAKE CONTROL OF AN-NABATIYAH

NC151551 Paris AFP in English 1523 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Jerusalem, Feb 15 (AFP) -- Tanks and artillery of Major Sa'd Haddad's Christian militia rolled into the southern Lebanon town of An-Nabatiyah today as Israeli military radio announced the dissident militia would soon be reintegrated into the regular Lebanese Army.

Informed sources near the Israeli-Lebanese border said the militia detachment entered An-Nabatiyah "to take control of the city."

Yesterday, militia forces entered the Lebanese port city of Sidon, and Major Haddad designated the former Al-Hamachri hospital as the first barracks of his "free Lebanese army," saying the "free state of Lebanon has extended, and extends, from An-Naqurah to Sidon."

The radio said U.S. special Middle East envoy Philip Habib informed Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir here today that the Israeli-supported militia would be reintegrated into the Lebanese Army very soon.

An Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman today said Mr Habib had told Mr Shamir that Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil and Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan (?are) "prepared to consider the return of Major Haddad to the Lebanese Army."

Major Haddad, whose dissident forces effectively control southern Lebanon, faces a possible death penalty as a renegade.

Observers near the border said Major Haddad had been occupying areas of southern Lebanon since yesterday, and that other operations such as that in An-Nabatiyah were expected tomorrow.

The operation, it was noted, began on Ari'el Sharon's last official day as Israeli defense minister. The Israeli press had recently said Mr Sharon intended to create such "faits accomplis" in southern Lebanon because of the slow progress of Israeli-Lebanese negotiations on border security arrangements to follow a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon.

Al-Jumayyil Asks U.S. Intervention

NC152052 Paris AFP in English 2036 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Beirut, Feb 15 (AFP) -- Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil today called on U.S. Ambassador Robert Dillon to intervene to put an end to the "extension of the state of free Lebanon" declared by pro-Israeli dissident Major Sa'd Haddad yesterday.

Major Haddad, who in 1978 proclaimed the "state of free Lebanon", a 10 kilometre (6 mile) east-west strip on the Lebanese side of the Israeli frontier, said yesterday: "The state of free Lebanon is extending and is extending from An-Naqurah to Sidon" (45 km 28 miles inside Lebanon).

VOAL Denounces Haddad's Moves

NC151846 (Clandestine) Voice of Arab Lebanon in Arabic 1730 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] The Israeli threats which have accompanied the proceedings of the negotiations have started to emerge from the meeting halls in Qiryat Shemona and Khaldah to be implemented on the land through agent Sa'd Haddad. Tel Aviv has supplied him with some tanks, which he has paraded in Sidon and An-Nabatiyah in a clear Israeli attempt to pressure the Lebanese stand and wave the cards of partition and division of sovereignty.

Observers have connected what is happening in the south with the course of the Lebanese-Israeli-American negotiations, and they have asked about the Lebanese state's reaction to this step. This reaction must be based on an official Lebanese stand on the whole negotiations. They have also inquired about the stance of the United States, which has given guarantees to the Lebanese Government, especially because what is happening both in the mountain and the south is practically threatening the fate of the entire homeland at a time when the area is on the verge of important developments affecting its future and that of its political map.

The question now is what is happening in the south? The fact is that Israel has moved its agent Sa'd Haddad to take over the south by handing him some old tanks and vehicles on which small emblems of his militias are embossed, but which were driven by soldiers of the occupation forces. Following Haddad's first step of occupying the Al-Hamshari hospital in Sidon and turning it into a military barracks for his militias, Haddad today inaugurated another military barracks in the city of An-Nabatiyah and staged a military parade of Israeli tanks in the streets of the city. This has aroused the anger of the inhabitants, who insist on the return of the legitimate authorities to their areas and on the ending of the nightmare of the occupation and its tanks.

SOURCE SAYS HADDAD'S STATUS BEING CONSIDERED

NC151824 Paris AFP in English 1808 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpt] Beirut, Feb 15 (AFP) -- A Lebanese military source today said the question of dissident Major Sa'd Haddad's future was still being considered and that no decision on the matter had been taken.

This statement followed reports from Israeli sources that U.S. special Middle East envoy Philip Habib had informed Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir in Jerusalem today that the Lebanese president and prime minister "were ready to consider the return of Major Haddad to the Lebanese Army."

The Lebanese source said Major Haddad's future had not been discussed with Mr Habib, who would not, in any case, transmit such proposals.

Major Haddad, whose militia control part of southern Lebanon and who is an ally of Israel, has since 1979 been under an arrest warrant from the Lebanese Army.

Israel has called for his re-integration into the Lebanese Army and for security tasks in southern Lebanon to be entrusted to him.

GUNMEN REPORTEDLY KILL 3 ISRAELIS IN SIDON

NC160606 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] Last night gunmen attacked an Israeli patrol at the southern approach of Sidon, firing rockets and killing three Israeli soldiers. As a result the Israeli forces became active in the area, reinforced their roadblocks and positions and as of 2330 initiated an extensive combing operation using flares and helicopters.

AL-ASAD, KHADDAM RECEIVE FRANCE'S CHEYSSON

JN151248 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] At 1100 today President Hafiz al-Asad received Claude Cheysson, French minister of external relations. The meeting was attended by 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and Henri Servant, French ambassador in Damascus. The talks dealt with bilateral relations, the situation in the region, and current world developments.

The French minister expressed satisfaction with his talks in Damascus. He said that among the urgent matters there is a pressing need to establish peace in the region and to give the Palestinian people -- not only those under occupation -- the right to self-determination. He added that the Palestinians themselves should determine their destiny, enjoy fill rights like the rest of the people in the region, and have a state of their own.

The president expressed satisfaction with the large similarity displayed during the Syrian-French talks in the two sides' opinions about the basic topics discussed. The president said that a radical solution to the region's problem lies in the establishment of a just peace. He added: We are working hard for this, but the others are talking about peace while trying to impose capitulation on the others. We want a just peace to be established. However, if this does not take place, we are not worried about the future. He said that the Israelis will not eventually achieve victory.

Official talks were held at the Foreign Ministry this morning between Khaddam and Cheysson. They were attended by 'Abd Al-Karim as-Sabbagh, director of the Foreign Ministry Information Department; Hunayn Hatim, director of the Arab Homeland Department; Sulayman Haddad, director of West Europe Department; and Dr Haytham Kilani, director of the International Organizations Department. They were attended for the French side by Cheysson's delegation and the French ambassador in Damascus.

The two sides completed their discussion of the current international situation, Middle East developments, and bilateral relations.

More on Al-Asad-Cheysson Meeting

JN151733 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpts] At 1100 today President Hafiz al-Asad received Claude Cheysson, French minister of external relations.

The president added that Israel wants to achieve peace according to its own terms, a pure Israeli type of peace not similar to the one known by world peoples. He added that the U.S. stand precludes the accomplishment of peace in the region and that the unlimited U.S. support for Israel as well as U.S. submission to Israeli policy and covetousness are the serous and real problem preventing the establishment of peace in the region. This, the president stressed, makes the Israelis feel so conceited and enables them to fulfil their desires. We want a just peace to be established. However, if this does not take place, we are not worried about the future. He said that the Israelis will not eventually achieve victory.

Touching on the situation in Lebanon, Cheysson said that there are subjects that must be tackled urgently, namely, the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and strengthening the Lebanese Government.

The president said that we consider Lebanon a fraternal country and consider the Zionist occupation of the Lebanese land as an occupation of our own land. We are struggling with the Lebanese for maintaining Lebanon's unity and independence and for ending the Israeli occupation.

Cheysson conveyed greetings from President Mitterrand to the president. The president asked Cheysson to convey similar greetings to Mitterrand.

Cheysson Press Conference Reported

JN151700 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] French External Relations Minister Claude Cheysson has called for an immediate Zionist withdrawal from all the occupied Lebanese territories and for the spread of the legitimate Lebanese authority's control over the entire country. He asserted that France backs Lebanon's right to spread its sovereignty and unite all its territories and that Syria joins France in this stand. He added: We became certain of this fact during the talks we held with the Syrian officials.

Speaking at a press conference he held in Damascus at noon today in the presence of foreign and Arab news agency correspondents, Cheysson said that he is proud of his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad which lasted for more than 2 hours. He said in this regard: It is a great honor that I met with his excellency the president for such a long time. Cheysson described his talks with the president as satisfactory and comprehensive.

Speaking about French-Syrian relations, Cheysson voiced his happiness at the promotion of relations in various spheres which serves the two countries' interests. He called for further bolstering bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy and trade.

Cheysson added: Besides our discussion of bilateral relations, our talks with Syrian officials focused on the situation in the Middle East and other international affairs. Cheysson stressed that Syria has a role that exceeds the boundaries of the Middle East region. Our talks, he said, also dealt with France's stand on the PLO and Lebanon as well as Israel. Concluding, Cheysson stressed that France backs the united Arab stand on the various issues of the hour based on the Fes Arab summit resolutions.

More on Press Conference

JN15147 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1220 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Telephone dispatch by Radio Monte Carlo correspondent in Damascus Louis Faris -- live or recorded]

[Excerpt] Cheysson was pleased with their identical views on Lebanon. The Syrian and French sides reject partial withdrawals and are working for full withdrawals and for securing the control of the legitimate Lebanese authority over the entire Lebanese territory. He expressed his conviction that Syria would withdraw its forces at Lebanon's request and when the Israeli forces withdraw completely. He denied that a future meeting between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Francois Mitterrand was discussed.

Answering a question by Radio Monte Carlo on France's relations with Syria and Iraq and the issue of the oil pipelines, Cheysson said: France has a firm and unchanging stand and the Syrian side was not surprised by the French stand. Cheysson vehemently reiterated France's interest in Arab unity based on the Fes summit resolutions. This naturally means that there is nothing new in this regard.

The French minister described his political talks with the Syrian president as frank and comprehensive. He described the two countries' relations as very close -- closer than with any of the Arab states with the exception of Lebanon. However, while viewpoints and analyses were in agreement on most issues discussed, there were different conclusions particularly with regard to issues concerning peace in the area and the Palestinian issue.

The French minister is currently preparing to return to Paris at the conclusion of his Middle East tour.

Cheysson Departs 15 Feb

JN151638 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] French External Relations Minister Claude Cheysson left Damascus this afternoon following a 2-day visit during which he met President Hafiz al-Asad.

Among those who saw him off at the airport were 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; several Foreign Ministry officials; and the French ambassador in Damascus.

AL-ASAD MEETS WITH CUBAN PARTY DELEGATION 12 FEB

JN121544 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1520 GMT 12 Feb 83

[Text] Damascus, 12 Feb (SANA) -- At 1500 today, President Hafiz al-Asid received the Cuban Communist Party [PCC] delegation led by Comrade Jesus Montane, alternate member of the PCC Politbureau and chief of the Foreign Relations Department. The meeting was attended by Muhammad Haydar, Ba'th Party National Command member and director of the party's Foreign Relations Office, and the Cuban ambassador in Damascus, Dr Lester Perez Rodriguez.

Comrade Montane conveyed the greetings of Cuban President Fidel Castro to the president, which he received graciously, and asked the ambassador to convey similar greetings to Castro and the Cuban people.

Talks between the two sides revolved around cooperation between the two countries and parties, matters of common interest, and the situation in the region and in the world.

14 Feb Joint Statement

JN141636 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1520 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Text] Damascus, 14 Feb (SANA) -- A joint statement was issued in Damascus and Havana today on the talks between an Arab Socialist Ba'th Party delegation, headed by Muhammad Haydar, Ba'th Party National Command member and head of the Foreign Relations Office, and a Cuban Communist Party [PCC] delegation headed by Jesus Montane, alternate member of the PCC Politburo and chief of the Foreign Relations Department, during the PCC delegation's 9-13 February 1983 visit to Syria at the invitation of the Ba'th Party National Command.

The statement stressed that the talks, which were held in an atmosphere of amity, mutual trust, and complete understanding, dealt with the relations of friendship and cooperation which exist between the two friendly countries and parties and the common desire to promote these relations in a manner that will serve their joint struggle against imperialism and Zionism.

The statement alloted special importance to the serious and tense situation in the Middle East resulting from Israel's continued policy of aggression and expansion and which culminated in Israel's barbaric aggression against Lebanon, its occupation of large parts of Lebanese territory, launching threats against Syria and preparing for aggression against it.

The two sides strongly condemned this aggression, backed by the United States, and the terrorist practices, killings and barbaric massacres that Israel has perpetrated against civilians during this aggression. The two sides also called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the invading Israeli forces from Lebanon and reiterated their support for Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The two sides praised the heroic steadfastness of the Syrian Arab Forces, the Palestinian revolution forces and the Lebanese and Palestinian people and their confrontation of this barbaric aggression. They also condemned the Camp David accords, their treasonous course and all the imperialist and Zionist attempts to impose this treasonous course on the other Arab countries.

The two sides condemned the Israeli decision to annex the occupied Syrian Arab territories in the Golan, Israel's measures of oppression in the occupied Arab territories and the establishment of settlements on these territories.

The two sides reiterated that just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be achieved only if Israel completely withdraws from all of the occupied Arab territories, including Arab Jerusalem, recognizes the Palestinian Arab people's inalienable national rights, and the establishment of their independent state on their national soil of Palestine under the leadership of the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative.

The two sides also condemned the policy of aggression of U.S. imperialism against the Latin American peoples, its blatant interference in the domestic affairs of these countries and its attempts to strike the revolutionary forces in Nicaragua, Grenada, and Suriname. They stressed their complete solidarity with the just struggle that the peoples and revolutionary movements in that continent are waging for their independence and social progress, particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The two sides expressed solidarity with the Asian and African people's struggle against imperialism, Zionism, and racism and for peace and national independence. They also expressed appreciation for the important role that Socialist bloc countries, foremost of which is the USSR, are playing in supporting and assisting the peoples' struggle, They also expressed support for the USSR's peace initiatives which aimed at bolstering world peace, checking the policy of aggression by U.S. imperialism, and averting the threats of a destructive nuclear war.

They denounced the current alliance between the racist Zionist entity in Israel and the racist regime in South Africa.

The two sides noted the important role that the Nonaligned Movement is playing in international policy and stressed their determination to support and develop this movement and safeguard its unity and objectives which are hostile to imperialism, Zionism, and racism. They also expressed appreciation for Cuba's role, particularly Comrade Fidel Castro's role, in his capacity as the chairman of the Nonaligned Movement.

The PCC delegation expressed appreciation for the Syrian people's achievements in the economic, social, and cultural spheres under the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and its secretary general, Comrade Hafiz al-Asad. The PCC delegation stressed its solidarity with the Syrian Arab people with respect to the preparations that are being made to launch a premeditated attack by Israel against Syria with the backing of U.S. imperialism.

The Syrian side expressed appreciation for the achievements that have been scored by the Cuban people under the leadership of the PCC and its first secretary, Comrade Fidel Castro, and reiterated its support for the just demands of the Cuban Government and people on the return of the territories that were illegally occupied by U.S. imperialism and which are now used by the Guantanamo Naval Base.

At the conclusion of the statement the two sides expressed satisfaction with the relations of friendship and cooperation between their parties and countries and stressed their desire to promote these relations. Within this framework, a new agreement for joint cooperation between the two parties for 1983-1984 was signed.

DAMASCUS RADIO COMMENTS ON PNC MEETING

JN141545 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Station commentary]

[Excerpts] A marked increase in advice directed at members of the Palestine National Council [PNC] has coincided with the convening of the council in Algiers. There have also been increasing warnings about the forthcoming stage and calls for laying down strategies that are alleged to be new or based on recent lessons, particularly the lessons learned from the battle of Beirut. Those who have been observing the situation closely since the events of Beirut and have seen what has been happening in the Arab arena cannot help but notice that there is a prominent trend in this campaign of advice, analysis, assessment, and deduction. This trend aims at capitulating to the current deteriorating situation in the region and at collecting what can be best achieved from subordination to the United States and agreeing to U.S. domination of the region. This trend also falls within the framework of conceding to the present and future inability of confronting Israeli quantitative and qualitative strategic superiority.

Strangely, some parties in the Arab homeland choose to ignore the experiences of nations, particularly the very recent Arab experience. They attempt to show a nonexistent contradiction between diplomatic and political action on the one hand, and endeavors aimed at denying the Zionist enemy from capitalizing on military superiority, pressure, and threats of using force on the other. More strangely, there are those who advise the Palestinians to ride on as-Sadat's collapsed bandwagon -- placing the cards in U.S. hands and awaiting the emergence of a Palestinian state and rights from the White House in Washington. Fortunately for the Arab nation, however, those who support this trend do not determine the final course of the masses and do not possess the ability to impose the inevitability of the course in the Arab arena. The experienced Arab masses will not relinquish their rights, will, and tools for defending themselves, their rights, land, freedom, and future. Those who ride as-Sadat's bandwagon and wager on his cards will meet his fate.

REPORTAGE ON HABIB-SHAMIR MEETING ON LEBANON

TA151249 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] U.S. special envoy Philip Habib has completed a round of talks with Israel's Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir in Jerusalem. Habib arrived in Israel after holding talks last night with Lebanese officials in Beirut on a possible 3-stage withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon. This is the first meeting between Habib and Israeli officials since former Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon gave up his defense portfolio. Alan Ben-Ami reports live from the foreign minister's office:

This morning Israel asked U.S. envoy Philip Habib to find out exactly what are Syrian and PLO attitudes on a withdrawal from Lebanon. Foreign Minister Shamir told the American diplomat that so far Israel has seen nothing to indicate there is even a basic readiness by the two sides to pull their forces out. According to one Israeli official, Habib said that the Lebanese have a commitment of PLO and Syrian readiness to withdraw. But then pressed on this by the foreign minister, he agreed to clarify exactly what that commitment is that the Lebanese are said to have. Habib himself apparently has no intention, for the moment, of traveling to Damascus to probe himself what is the Syrian attitude on troop withdrawal. Israelis say the U.S. envoy did promise, however, that he would look into the question of Israeli prisoners in PLO and Syrian hands and the fate of five missing soldiers. He also said he would seek (?aid) on this from other parties.

Israeli officials also insist there was no detailed discussion this morning of any U.S. proposals for troop withdrawals from Lebanon or even for a partial pullback by Syrian and Israeli forces. Although progress is being made in the negotiations at Khaldah and Qiryat Shemona, my understanding is that this is more of a technical nature regarding the wording of the agreement outling the basic approach to security arrangements in south Lebanon and bilateral relations between Israel and Lebanon. The hardcore problems regarding the role of UNIFIL and Major Haddad and the question of Israeli antiterrorist stations in southern Lebanon are still nowhere near being resolved.

Tomorrow the Israeli steering committee on Lebanon is to meet. This committee did include Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon; it now appears that he will no longer be a member of that committee. Habib himself has no meeting set with Israeli leaders in the next day or 2. At the foreign minister's office, this is Alan Ben-Ami.

IDF Radio Account

TA151600 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1510 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Report by political correspondent 'Oz Frenkel -- recorded]

[Text] While the political storm is calming down, it seems that Jerusalem will now return to dealing with the issue that has been obliterated by the flames of the last few days: the negotiations over arrangements in Lebanon. Philip Habib today met with the foreign minister and he again requested that the political attempts be increased. His interlocutors hinted to him that perhaps he would have done better to wait for a week or two until the new defense minister's entry into office. However, Philip Habib, it seems, is not prepared for a recess because of the pressures of Israeli politics. Habib said today that he knows the difficulties, but he is holding a discussion with a government, not individuals.

Habib claimed that in his meetings in Beirut the leaders of the administration there expressed optimism about the chance of achieving an arrangement in the near future. This is what the envoy heard from Amin al-Jumayyil himself and also from Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan. Al-Wazzan, let us recall, is generally described as someone who is actually trying to hold up direct contacts. The envoy also claimed that Beirut has agreed to Major Haddad's force being incorporated into the Lebanese Army in the south. Political sources claimed that it was not clear from all this what post Haddad himself would hold in this framework.

Philip Habib did not bring new formulations with him today -- neither plans for an interim withdrawal nor ideas for accelerating the contacts. Following today's meeting, political circles said that even if Habib had brought a new and crystallized program with him to the Middle East, he did not mention it, even in a hint.

The foreign minister asked whether the envoy knew about the positions of Syria and the PLO on the removal of their forces. To this, Habib answered that the Syrians had guaranteed to Lebanon their willingness to leave that country. The envoy could not report anything more than that, and he promised to continue to examine the issue.

This, then, is the situation. Apart from his old desire to bring about a rapid conclusion of the negotiations, Philip Habib brought very little news with him. Let us also note that after some weeks the steering committee for the negotiations with Lebanon headed by the prime minister is to meet tomorrow in Jerusalem.

'Agreement' on Haddad Status

TA151540 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Israeli officials reported today that Israel and Lebanon have reached an agreement [haskama] that Sa'd Haddad's militia will be reincorporated within the Lebanese Army. At the same time, no agreement has yet been reached on whether Major Haddad will continue to command his men. The Israeli officials said this at the end of the meeting between Yitzhaq Shamir and Philip Habib in Jerusalem.

Discussion on Syrian Stations

TA151827 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Israel is still insisting on manning its own antiterrorist stations in southern Lebanon, but it would not oppose similar Syrian demands for the Al-Biqa' provided there is strict parity in the number of soldiers and types of weapons. According to one Israeli official, only a few hundred soldiers would be involved and there would be a written agreement specifying the time they will remain in Lebanon. U.S. special envoy Philip Habib discussed the issue this morning with Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir. The U.S. envoy is seeking an agreement for a withdrawal timetable which would lead to a complete pullout of foreign forces from Lebanon within 10 weeks. Israel says it still wants confirmation that Syria and the PLO are ready to leave Lebanon and is prepared for an initial separation of forces to test Syrian intentions.

HADDAD FORCES MOVE INTO SIDON, AN-NABATIYAH

TA151604 Tel Aviv ITIM in Hebrew 1555 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Southern Lebanon, 15 Feb (ITIM) -- An expeditionary force of Major Haddad's units arrived in Sidon today and was welcomed by cheers and waving hands.

The commanders of the force conducted tours throughout the city during the day and closely monitored the moods and sentiments of the inhabitants. The force is about the size of a company and has armored personnel carriers and Sherman tanks. The equipment of the company includes booty left behind by the terrorists in the course of the war.

A limited force from Haddad's units also entered An-Nabatiyah today; it is comprised of a number of armored personnel carriers. The troops deployed all over the town and announced that beginning today it has control over the town. The entry of Haddad's forces into Sidon and An-Nabatiyah constitutes the first step toward their entry into additional areas.

Senior officers from Haddad's army are hoping that the forces that entered Sidon and An-Nabatiyah will help the local inhabitants live in peace and safety and will enable the IDF to deal with other matters. IDF commanders who know the Haddad army close up believe that he will be able to successfully face the heavy regional problems in the south and will primarily prevent the terrorists' return.

IDF OPENS ADDITIONAL LEBANON BORDER CROSSING

TA160804 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0740 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] The IDF has reopened the border crossing between Lebanon and Israel near 'Alma village. This border crossing has been opened at the request of inhabitants of southern Lebanon who wanted an additional border crossing point for the passage of goods between the two countries. Until now, the passage of goods and vehicles was permitted only at the Rosh Haniqra and Metulla border crossings, our correspondent Menahem Horowitz notes.

BEGIN COMMENTS ON SETTLEMENTS, PLO TALKS

TA141235 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Text] The prime minister has told a visiting Europarliament delegation that changes in Israel's Cabinet will not affect the Middle East peace process.

[Begin Begin recording] The internal developments in Israel do not have and will not have any impact on the problem of peace in the Middle East. There is a government, there is a parliament -- of course, in parliament there is an opposition comme il faut, as it should be, in any democratic country -- and we shall deal with all outstanding problems. [end recording]

In a noon meeting at the Knesset, the prime minister said that Israel will continue establishing settlements in the administered territories and would never agree to the idea of a Palestinian state. He told the delegation that there would be no negotiations with the PLO because no nation should enter into discussion with anyone seeking its destruction. Prime Minister Begin also called the Camp David accords the only vehicle for resolving the Middle East problem and condemned the Reagan plan, which calls for a Palestinian entity in a confederation with Jordan.

The Europarliament delegation is now being addressed by Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir. Earlier, Labor opposition leader Shim'on Peres told the delegation on that Europe's attitude to the PLO causes a further hardening in the PLO's own attitude.

SHARON ADDRESSES DEFENSE MINISTRY EMPLOYEES

TA141157 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1110 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Report by military correspondent Shmu'el Tal outside Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv -- live]

[Text] We are standing on the tarmac near the Defense Ministry. A few minutes ago the defense minister left here in his car. Many people are crowding in here today, where there was an honor guard and a military ceremony. The defense minister shook the hands of the IDF generals while the band played. The defense minister went from one general to another and shook their hands. He later got into his car and left.

This morning the defense minister met with the General Staff. The generals were actually surprised to see that this ceremony is also being very well documented. The defense minister invited journalists and photographers to his office. After posing for pictures, the minister took his leave of the General Staff. The chief of staff wished them the best of luck.

Just before noon the defense minister met senior officials of his office, including heads of departments and directors of defense industries. He told them, in his opinion, the feeling in Israel that our people are entitled to defend our existence and to go to war in self-defense has been undermined.

Sharon said: In the past, I described situations in which we would attack. For example, I said that if Iraq introduced forces into Jordan we would go to war. In the wake of all the events that have occurred here I feel today that it will not be easy to make such a decision.

Will we really attack first, before the Iraqis enter Jordan? Sharon asked rhetorically. He addressed the top officials of the Defense Ministry: Today, after everything that has happened, I have doubts about it. He went on to say: I spoke in the past about the possibility that Egypt might violate the peace treaty and introduce troops into the Sinai. I said Israel would not be able to accept this and that it would then be necessary to act at once and wait no longer. If somebody asks me about this issue, then I am not at ease on this issue either.

Sharon further stated: I pointed out the nuclear issue. I referred to it in the past and said that if an Arab state manufactured or held nuclear weapons -- and Israel cannot and will not accept this -- Israel would attack at once. In light of the general atmosphere prevailing here, Sharon told the Defense Ministry's senior personnel, I have doubts whether we will be the first to attack.

Sharon also mentioned what he called the deterioration of Israel's deterrent power. He did not explicitly state that the reason for this deterioration, as he phrased it, is his retirement from the Defense Ministry. However, the timing and the forum in which he made these remarks speak for themselves.

Sharon added that on each of the points he mentioned, it is necessary to act before the danger becomes too great and before we lose what we have. These are sine qua nons to which one should react at once. These issues have a far-reaching impact on the army's structure and on the defense budget. On this point, Sharon also questioned whether a weakening would not also occur in this sphere.

Sharon told the Defense Ministry personnel: I am not defeated as I leave. I am the only one who has drawn conclusions and against whom sentence has been passed. Later, on the tarmac behind the Defense Ministry building, on the large lawn, Sharon addressed the Defense Ministry workers:

[Begin recording] As to the weakening of Israel and the issuing of an international seal of approval to acts of aggression against it and against any Jew wherever he may be throughout the world, I take an exceptionally serious view of these tendencies which stem from, among other things, the unwillingness of several nations in the world to reconcile themselves with the idea of an independent Jewish state capable of defending itself, which will not allow anybody to turn it into a protectorate and its citizens into protegess. [end recording]

These were the defense minister's remarks to ministry workers in the backyard of the building. The atmosphere was restrained and so was the applause. The defense minister has now left and the workers have dispersed.

SHARON NOT TO BE INVOLVED IN LEBANON DECISIONS

TA151546 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 15 Feb 83 pp 1, 7

[Report by political correspondent Ilan Kfir]

[Excerpt] Former Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon will no longer participate in deliberations in which Israel's policy in Lebanon is determined. All of Sharon's duties and authority in the senior steering team for the negotiations with Lebanon -- which also includes the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the defense minister -- will be transferred to the new defense minister, Professor Moshe Arens, immediately upon his entering office.

Up to Professor Arens' arrival, the prime minister, together with the foreign minister, will undertake all the ministerial responsibility as part of the senior steering team that will direct the Israeli delegation to the negotiations and determine Israel's policy.

Senior government sources have reported that the decision to demote Sharon from all positions and authority related to the negotiations with Lebanon is called for in view of the commission of inquiry's conclusions and Sharon's dismissal from his post.

According to ministers, although the commission of inquiry only centered on a narrow aspect and a small portion of the war in Lebanon -- the massacre in Sabra and Shatila -- the no confidence expressed in Sharon in regard to this affair enhances the feeling most Cabinet members have that the former defense minister failed in his Lebanon policy and has thus entangled Israel in his independent policy, which did not always receive prior Cabinet consent.

The prime minister has not yet officially informed Sharon that he will cease to be involved in the negotiations with Lebanon, in which he has so far played a dominant role as the minister who initiated and pushed a lot of moves.

However, according to the prime minister's associates, there is no need for such an announcement. It has been reported that Sharon will be able to express his views on political and security matters just like any other Cabinet member, during Cabinet sessions.

Government ministers, including some holding senior positions, oppose Sharon's membership in the limited ministerial team on security matters. Deputy Prime Minister David Levi is not on that committee and some ministers believe that it would be inconceivable for Begin to allow the former defense minister to continue to serve on that committee in his new status as minister without portfolio.

Jerusalem anticipates improved relations with the U.S. Administration in view of the reshuffle in the Defense Ministry. Senior political sources have said that Sharon added an unnecessary touch of tension and suspiciousness to the fabric of relations with the United States and this was damaging to Israel.

Cabinet ministers yesterday expressed anger at Sharon's remarks during the farewell ceremonies, in which they claim he tried to create the impression that with his departure danger to Israel is imminent and its deterrent force might be harmed.

The prime minister has not yet finalized with Sharon what his spheres of activity in the Cabinet will be. This issue will only be discussed in future. Sharon may take leave and only then will the spheres of action and the duties with which he will deal be discussed. The prime minister probably will entrust Sharon with "ad hoc" missions, most likely those having implications for the future of Judaea and Samaria.

MA'ARIV ON U.S. PRESSURE AFTER COMMISSION REPORT

TA111430 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 11 Feb 83 p 15

[Commentary by Moshe Zaq: "Scenario Presented to President Reagan"]

[Excerpts] Four days before the prime minister of Israel got the first copy of the Kahan commission report, President Reagan heard from his advisers the word that "the ouster of Ari'el Sharon from his job as a result of the conclusions drawn by the commission of inquiry might help break up the deadlock in the negotiations on the withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon."

Not always do the White House aides have the chance to hit the "bull's eye" in presenting assessments of situations to the President regarding some future development, but this time their evaluations -- 4 days before the people of Israel knew about the content of the report -- was correct. Indeed, the commission called for "personal conclusions" regarding the defense minister. That, the officials assured the President, was a promise. There assessments proved true, their hopes fulfilled, the information they supplied credible and reliable.

Now they are anticipating the implementation of the second part of the report they gave the President: How the weakening of the Begin government would stand up to their hopes for "greater amenability to compromise."

This is why Philip Habib did not wait until the shock of the Kahan commission report dissipated, until after the public commotion in Israel calmed down, until the Cabinet implemented the commission's conclusions. Ambassador Habib rushed to Jerusalem to bring the prime minister "an unwritten message" from President Reagan with a demand [tvi'a] for immediate withdrawal and was supposed to carry out an examination of how the Cabinet's internal difficulties affected its ability to deal with political matters.

When Habib arrived in Jerusalem, he was amazed to find out that even if Ari'el Sharon resigned after the Cabinet adopted the commission's conclusions, there was still no certainty that he could advance the negotiations regarding the Reagan plan, as per the assessment during that meeting at the White House.

He found out that the Cabinet was still holding on to the option of delaying negotiations on the Reagan plan regarding Judaea and Samaria. The U.S. assessment was that Menahem Begin's coalition partners would not let him declare elections for fear that the results would be unfavorable to them, but upon arriving in Jerusalem, Habib found out that this option remained open and the prime minister could exercise it. Some Washington officials got into a panic, and the possibility cannot be dismissed that despite the declarations that "the United States does not interfere in Israel's domestic affairs," the ways to exert influence in order to prevent early elections in Israel might well be discussed at today's scheduled National Security Council meeting: The matter is not an internal Israeli matter, which is why "one can hardly assume that Israel would turn down advice or pressure from the outside" regarding the negotiations. This is pretty clear: The Reagan plan is at stake.

To Washington holding early elections appears an even worse alternative than leaving Arik Sharon, whom it hates with a passion, in office, because early elections would freeze the negotiations over the Reagan plan, whereas it is Washington's hope that the settlements would be frozen as the first gesture to Husayn toward his joining the negotiations.

Washington does not like these prospects of a freeze, and we will no doubt feel the first signs of this dissatisfaction in the next few days.

First and foremost, already in the next few days we will need all of the support we can get from the United States at the UN Security Council, when the Jordanian appeal regarding the settlements is debated. Although we have so far incurred so many condemnations at the Security Council, now the Arabs will no doubt try to exacerbate and sharpen the resolution and include a threat of sanctions to it. We have written U.S. pledges not to support resolutions harmful to Israel, but it is not inconceivable that the United States would require something in return, in the form of a pledge not to freeze the negotiations process during the elections, knowing that the settlement issue would be one of the most central issues in the election campaign, if elections are really advanced.

It is true that the U.S. Administration does not like Ari'el Sharon, but it is not because of Sabra and Shatila that the administration wants him out. It wants him out not because he would not let the settlements be frozen, whereas without him Begin might become more pliable. The administration wants him to go just as it wanted and managed to achieve Secretary of State Alexander Haig's exit, because Sharon symbolizes the strategic understanding that prevailed between Jerusalem and Washington on the eve of the war in Lebanon.

Ari'el Sharon is living in a dream world if he thinks the United States is indebted to him for having brought it to Lebanon and pushing the Syrians, the Soviets' allies, out. This was Alexander Haig's view, but now a new school has the say in Washington, and although this school has no "concept" regarding what should be done in Lebanon, apart from the removal of the foreign forces, still it has a clear opinion that the sooner the Marines get out of Lebanon, the better for the United States.

The faithful of this school are perplexed and do not know how to get out of the Lebanese labyrinth. They are enraged with us for having involved them in a dead-end situation, encumbering them with a divided Lebanon. First they "punished" Alexander Haig, and now it is Ari'el Sharon's turn, the clear aim being to erase and wipe out the traces of cooperation.

Ari'el Sharon stuck too zealously to the Haig "conception" that advocated the creation of a new political fabric in the Middle East, the first stage of which would be the establishment of a stable, authoritative regime in Lebanon. This is why he wanted to adjust the speed of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to the speed with which that administration, friendly to Israel, established itself. He disregarded signs indicating that meanwhile a change has occured in the U.S. strategic view of the Middle East.

The administration shed the concept over which Ari'el Sharon based the understanding regarding the objectives in Lebanon. The U.S. Administration wants to erase awareness of this summertime episode, uproot it altogether. Thus, Ari'el Sharon's presence in the Lebanon negotiations, symbolizing one who adheres to an understanding that is passe, disturbed them. This is why they are so eager to have him go.

Alexander Haig was one of those people dismissed following a roaring victory: The IDF's victory in Lebanon. He was fired then because the arrangement in Lebanon was not reached on time, that is before the "propitious time" ended, or before the new administration in the Kremlin stabilized itself and before the Arab world managed to unite round the "Fes plan."

The administration may have been prepared to accept a brief war in Lebanon that was to have altered the state of affairs in the region, but the longer the war continued, the less one could envision a way out; the intersectional killing continues, and so Washington has grown impatient.

Since we are dealing with a simplistic administration, lacking political sophistication, it soon reached the conclusion that this business had better be concluded fast, with no fruther delays, in order to allow the Marines to leave as soon as possible rather than drown in the Lebanese quicksands.

And since Ari'el Sharon still sticks to the goals for which he launched the war in Lebanon and for which he is putting off the withdrawal of the foreign forces, his dismissal should be encouraged in order to make possible the removal of the foreign forces and ultimately also lead to the Marine's departure. Therefore, when Washington encountered such a recommendation by the Israeli commission of inquiry, people there were happy in retrospect.

This is a period of national crisis not resulting from the coalition crisis lurking over the Cabinet's head or from the need to carry out personnel reshuffles at the top, but simply because of the moral distress left behind as an afterstate after reading that report.

It is against this background that the U.S. "propaganda" has greater reverberations in the Israeli Administration -- reverberations affecting the coalition and the opposition alike. The Cabinet was shocked by the report. The only way to rehabilitate a stable regime at least in Israel -- seeing that we have failed in our efforts to set up one in Lebanon -- is by way of elections, and it is precisely at this point where we run counter to the U.S. influence that penetrates all the elements of the Israeli political establishment and encourages those who believe that the time is not ripe for elections. This is not stated in so many words, but it is obvious to anyone: Declaring early elections will freeze the "Reagan plan" and perhaps even give it a kiss of death.

But the Israeli society needs elections, the panacea for the crisis of confidence that has hit us following the shock given by the Kahan commission report, even if this does not coincide with the dates the U.S. Administration has set for a comprehensive arrangement in the Middle East.

The government's adoption of the Kahan commission conclusions does not liberate us from the need to hold elections at once.

CURFEWS, DISTURBANCES REPORTED IN WEST BANK

TA152113 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] A curfew was imposed on the village of Baytillu in the Ramallah District after villagers were suspected to have pushed into the valley a jeep belonging to a settler from 'Ofra. No one was in the jeep when this was done.

The curfew on Nabulus was extended this evening since stonethrowing continued in its streets. One person was injured while driving a car near Ar-Rashidiyah. Anti-area village leagues slogans have been painted in Samaria villages.

In the past 2 days, some 200 people suspected of throwing stones have been arrested in Judaea and Samaria and some of them will very soon be brought before military courts. These details have been reported this evening by our correspondent Pinhas 'Inbari.

CALLS FOR PLO SUPPORT INCREASE IN TERRITORIES

TA151724 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Calls of support for the PLO and the Palestine National Council are increasing in the territories. Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that students from the Bethlehem University today convened a solidarity rally in which they called for strengthening Palestinian unity. A similar call was made by the Lawyers' Union in the Gaza Strip. They support a tightening of the links between the PLO and Jordan.

IVORY COAST, TOGO, CHAD PRESIDENTS' COMMUNIQUE

AB111428 Abidjan Domestic Service in French 1245 GMT 11 Feb 83

[Communique issued 11 February 1983 following meeting of leaders of Chad, Togo, and Ivory Coast in Lome]

[Text] His Exellency Hissein Habre, head of state of Chad, paid a 1-day friendly visit to Lome during which he met with his peers His Excellency Felix Houphouet-Boigny, head of state of Ivory Coast, and His Excellency Gnassingbe Eyadema, founding chairman of the Togolese People's Rally and president of the Republic of Togo.

The three heads of state seized the opportunity of their meeting to review the international situation and in particular that on the African Continent. At the international level, President Houphouet-Boigny of Ivory Coast, President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, and President Hissein Habre of Chad deplored the persistent disastrous economic situation whose adverse effects are felt mainly by African states. They declared that the strengthening of cooperation among developing countries can ensure the complementarity of these countries' economies. On the situation on the African Continent, they deplored the OAU crisis and said that no effort should be spared to save the organization, which is the ideal forum for continental political consultation. The three heads of state deplored the delay in the negotiations on Namibia's future and expressed the hope that wisdom would prevail and hasten the independence of Namibia as well as ensure stability in the region. During their talks, His Excellency Hissein Habre, president of the republic and head of state of Chad, informed his peers at length about the situation in his country since 7 June 1982. He was pleased with the results obtained in Chad where there is now calm, peace, and stability. He also said that he would make every effort to create all the conditions needed for lasting peace through national unity through consultations, dialogue, and mutually advantageous cooperation.

The heads of state of Ivory Coast and Togo strongly urged the Chadian president to continue his policy of national recovery. His Excellency Hissein Habre sincerely thanked His Excellency Houphouet-Boigny and His Excellency General Gnassingbe Eyadema for the interest they have constantly taken in Chad's problems. The three heads of state expressed satisfaction with the significance of the talks and the exchange of views and decided to meet as often as possible to exchange experiences.

ENTENTE COUNCIL GRANT FOR DEPORTEES FROM NIGERIA

AB100823 Lome Domestic Service in French 1900 GMT 9 Feb 83

[Text] Before leaving Kara with General Gnassingbe Eyadema, President Houphouet-Boigny declared that the Entente Council had decided to donate 700 million CFA francs to member states whose citizens were affected by the Nigerian expulsion order.

[Begin Houphouet-Boigny recording] In the spirit of active solidarity which has always prevailed in relations between its members, the Entente Council has decided to donate 700 million CFA francs to the deportees of the Entente Council countries. The current chairman and the secretary general of the Entente Council have been entrusted with the task of distributing this sum among the recipients. We feel that this brotherly gesture which we have made should bear evidence to our active solidarity with the unfortunate deportees from Lagos. [applause] [end recording]

LIBYA

GENERAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS SENDS TELEGRAM TO PNC

LD150314 Tripoli Voice of Arab Homeland in Arabic 0015 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] The General People's Congress has sent a telegram to the Palestinian National Congress [PNC] which is now in session in Algeria. Here is its text:

In the name of God, to the PNC in Algiers.

The Libyan Arab people who are meeting at the eighth session of the General People's Congress 1392 AH, corresponding to 1983 AD of the People's Congresses, People's Committees, the federations, trade unions, and vocational leagues, wish to say that through this congress we address this appeal to your PNC that the Zionist train of death -- which is supported by U.S. imperialism and Arab reaction -- may be confronted, that the Arab nation's aspirations may be realized in confronting this imminent danger, and that liberation may be achieved. The Libyan Arab people, in response to the appeal of the leader of the revolution, the brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, have approved in their People's Congresses the program of revolutionary action for a comprehensive mobilization to stop this train of death and to break the psychological barrier of the Arab man in order to arrive at a stage of counterattack to liberate the entire usurped Palestinian Arab soil. We address this appeal to your PNC confident in the ability of the Palestinian Arab people to make the proper decision of confronting the Zionist enemy and engaging in a struggle with him -- the struggle for existence, the struggle for life or death which absorbs all that has taken place in the Arab arena, especially after the failure of all the Arab regimes, parties and groupings, and the bankruptcy of their traditional means had been proved.

The choice of the Palestinian Arab people at this juncture will undoubtedly influence the destiny of the entire Arab nation; indeed, it will most certainly influence the cause of freedom in the entire world. Your decision will be in the interest of your cause, your nation, and the freedom of man everywhere. You will trample on all attempts to subjugate you and bring you to your knees. You will breach the lines of siege around your cause and [word indistinct] by adhering to the rifle until victory or martyrdom. Forward with you and the struggle shall continue.

SUDAN

NUMAYRI RETURNS FROM VISIT TO EGYPT 14 FEB

JN141810 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1755 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Text] Aswan, Khartoum, 14 Feb (SUNA) -- President of the Republic Ja'far Muhammad Numayri returned home this afternoon following a short visit to Aswan during which he met with Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak.

During their 3-hour meeting in Aswan the two presidents discussed the accomplishments of bilateral integration and the best methods for promoting it. They also reviewed the situation in Lebanon and the Iraqi-Iranian war.

It was agreed that the Higher Integration Council will meet in Khartoum on 22 February.

GHANA

EVACUATION EXERCISE TO END OFFICIALLY 18 FEB

AB151831 Accra Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] The coordinator of the national evacuation task force, Commodore Obimpeh, has announced that the evacuation of Ghanaian deportees from Nigeria ends officially next Friday. Speaking to the GHANA NEWS AGENCY in Accra, he explained that the number of deportees returning home has now reduced considerably from several thousands to between 200 and 400 a day and there is no longer any desperation on their parts, adding: "Most of those coming home now are in good health." From that date there will be no transport to convey the returnees to their hometowns as has been the case. However, the task force's office will be maintained with a skeleton staff to handle the social problems of those returning home after Friday. It will also continue receiving aid and donations on their behalf. A limited number of buses will continue to be detailed to the Aflao border to bring in new arrivals to the reception centers where they can be provided with transport to the lorry parks to find their own means of transport home. The force will work hand in hand with the national committee on the rehabilitation of the deportees to ensure that they receive their share of relief aid.

Commodore Obimpeh announced that the registration of returnees at the local and district levels will begin the next few days. The exercise is expected to furnish the regional and district mobilization and rehabilitation committees with requisite data concerning their resettlement.

RAWLINGS CALLS NIGERIAN EXPULSION 'CONSPIRACY'

AB141425 Accra Domestic Service in English 1300 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Text] The chairman of the PNDC [Provisional National Defense Council], Flight Lieutenant Rawlings, has emphasized that all the cynical moves against Ghana will fail. In an interview with the NEWSWEEK correspondent in Accra, he said the expulsion of more than 1 million illegal Ghanaian immigrants from Nigeria is a conspiracy against his government. Flight Lieutenant Rawlings pointed out that countries which are helping others to overthrow their neighbors are creating circumstances under which they will become victims in future.

NIGERIA

SHAGARI ASKS FOR INCREASE IN 1983 BUDGET

AB151338 Lagos Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Excerpt] President Shehu Shagari has asked for an increase of about 260 million naira to this year's budget estimates. In a letter to both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the president said this was necessary because of the need to offset some aspects of external loans, specifically ties to the financing of projects accorded high priority.

SOURCES SAY NO RSA-ANGOLA MEETING SOON

AB141024 Paris AFP in French 1527 GMT 13 Feb 83

[Text] Praia, 13 Feb (AFP) -- It appears the holding of a second meeting between Angolan and South African representatives in Cape Verde will not be possible soon, diplomatic circles in Praia disclosed on Sunday. According to this source, the Angolan-South African negotiations on Namibia and security along the borders of the two countries, whose resumption had been given every assurance, had to be postponed at the request of the South African authorities due to the difficulties being allegedly met by Pretoria in compiling the list of proposals it has to submit to the government in Luanda during the second meeting scheduled to take place in Cape Verde.

For its part, Angola is always ready to resume the talks with South Africa. The sources in Praia stressed that the first meeting between he two countries, which took place at Sal in Cape Verde on 8 December 1982, was at the request of South African authorities. Although Cape Verdian authorities continue to be silent on all issues concerning the negotiations, observers in Praia believe that the talks could only resume after the forthcoming nonaligned summit scheduled for 7 March 1983 in New Delhi, India. In fact, Cape Verdian President Aristides Pereira and Foreign Affairs Minister Silvino da Luz, who have been playing an important role in the negotiations -- not only as leaders of the host country, but also as mediators -- will visit Kuwait and India beginning from 15 February 1983, official sources confirmed. Furthermore, the Angolan president will also leave for India for the nonaligned summit. It is therefore likely that the second round of the Angolan-South African negotiations will not take place in the absence of the two Cape Verdian leaders, and will only take place finally after the New Delhi summit.

ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE LAUNCH DIPLOMATIC 'OFFENSIVE'

AB151737 Paris AFP in English 1720 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Luanda, Feb. 15 (AFP) -- Angola and Mozambique are in close contact over negotiations with South Africa in order to present a united front, diplomatic sources said here today. Officials from both frontline states have held several meetings in recent weeks in order to adopt joint positions during forthcoming talks with Pretoria on Namibian independence, the source said.

Sources said that Angolan Interior Minister Lieutenant-Colonel Alexandre Rodrigues "Kito" reportedly made a secret visit to the Cape Verde capital at the beginning of the month to prepare the second round of talks with Pretoria which opened on December 9. The source said there was still disagreement over the status of the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and because of Pretoria's apparent insistence on Angola ending its diplomatic support for the Namibian guerrilla movement and for the anti-apartheid African National Congress. Pretoria also reportedly asked Angola to send a large delegation to the next round of talks, the source said. According to reports from Praia, the second round of talks between Angola and South Africa was postponed at Pretoria's request.

The aim of the contacts between Maputo and Luanda has been to present a common front in the face of Pretoria's demands, since South Africa at the same time as publicly announcing its intention to negotiate has hiked the stakes to a level which is unacceptable to the two states. The Angolan and Mozambican Governments have decided to hit back by launching a diplomatic offensive in the West, an informed source said.

The recent visit by Foreign Minister Paulo Jorge to Britain was part of the initiative, the source said. Observers noted that Mr. Jorge's visit demonstrated Angola's willingness to obtain the support of Western countries and constituted a concession to one of South Africa's most important trading partners. The foreign minister's recent announcement that the seven British mercenaries held in Luanda would soon be released after insistent requests from London was another gesture of goodwill by Angola. The forthcoming visit to France by Mozambican President Samora Machel is also part of the diplomatic offensive.

ANGOLA

UNITA REPORTS KILLING 55 CUBANS, 161 ANGOLANS

PAL60035 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2358 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Lisbon, 15 Feb (EFE) -- In a single day, although in 10 different actions, guerrillas of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) killed 55 Cubans and 161 Angolan soldiers, according to a "war communique" issued in Lisbon today. The communique, given to EFE by UNITA representative in Portugal, lists 10 acts of war -- almost all ambushes set for Angolan Government forces and their Cuban allies -- carried out by the guerrillas on 11 February.

"At approximately 1100," the communique states, "a Cuban column was attacked in the Pundo mountains, in Benguela Province. Seven vehicles were destroyed and 25 Cubans and 32 members of the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) were killed." According to the the communique, 20 minutes after that attack, the UNITA guerrillas ambushed eight vehicles "loaded with FAPLA and Cuban soldiers, 14 km from Alto Hama, north of Huambo. In the ambush, 19 Cubans and 31 Angolan soldiers fell, including the brigade inspector [comisario] and his aid."

Finally, the communique, signed by "Brigadier General Demonstenes Chilingutila" at the "jamba strategic base" on 13 February, admits that in the 10 actions noted, 17 UNITA guerrillas were killed and 32 wounded.

LESOTHO

BNP SAYS FUEL DEPOT ATTACK 'ACT OF VANDALISM'

MB151308 Maseru Domestic Service in English 1130 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] The ruling Basutho National Party, BNP, has informed the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, AAPSO, of last Sunday's bombings of the fuel depot in Maseru by South Africa. In a message addressed to the secretary general of AAPSO, the BNP characterizes the attack, which was done by helicopter, as an act of vandalism. The BNP notes that the repeated acts of sabotage by the racist regime of Pretoria are aimed at undermining Lesotho's sovereignty and to subjugate the country to the whims and fancies of South Africa. The most important dream of these acts of sabotage, the BNP observes, is to extend the South African regime's time in oppressing and exploiting the black citizens of South Africa. The BNP message to AAPSO concludes by asserting the party's position to apartheid and affirming its commitment to accepting South African refugees in Lesotho.

NAMIBIA

SWATF: SIX BUSHMEN KILLED BY SWAPO 'TERRORISTS'

MB151444 Johannesburg Domestic Service in Afrikaans 1400 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Three bushman women and three children were killed on Sunday night by SWAPO terrorists near (Katwetwe) where the Kavango and Angolan borders meet. South-West Africa Territory Force [SWATF] headquarters said in a statement issued in Windhoek this afternoon that two more bushmen and two women were injured. They were taken to Rundu by a helicopter of the South African Air Force. The civilian bushmen were sitting at a campfire when the terrorists fired on them with AK-47 and (SKS) automatic rifles. Security troops are on the trail of the group.

SOUTH AFRICA

VIOLENCE FOLLOWS DEMOLITION OF SQUATTER CAMP

MB160704 Umtata Capital Radio in English 0600 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] Violence has broken out at the KTC squatter camp at Suguletu, Cape Town. Residents apparently have a right to live in the area but they have nowhere to stay. As a result they have started the KTC settlement, but their dwellings have been torn down by Western Cape Administration Board officials. From Cape Town Beatty Hofmeyer reports:

[Hofmeyer] The demolition of the KTC camp sparked off violence in the adjoining townships of Guguletu and Nyanga. Vehicles were stoned and thousands of people gathered in the area. Police used teargas and dogs to drive back the crowd. A youth was reportedly injured after shots were fired. After the demolition several hundred people gathered and sang: We are going to build again. Even as the shelters were being torn down more were being built last night. About 200 shacks were left standing. The demolitions are expected to carry on today.

POLICE CLAIM SUCCESS IN MAINTAINING SECURITY

MB160753 Johannesburg International Service in English 0630 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] The annual report of the South African police commissioner says the police have had notable success in maintaining national security despite an increase in sabotage attacks. The report, which has been tabled in Paliament in Cape Town, says the ANC had attempted to use front organizations to stir up agitation in a clandestine manner, and there had been an intensified propaganda attempt aimed at the masses. However, intimidation had been restricted to such an extent that only insignificant numbers had attended gatherings initiated by these front organizations. The report said that the international funding of South African black trade unions was still taking place, and several South African trade unions had affiliated themselves with foreign trade union federations. Strikes had occurred more frequently and had been accompanied by greater militancy.

ZIMBABWE

GOVERNMENT THREATENS AREAS SUPPORTING DISSIDENTS

AB151624 Paris AFP in English 1602 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] Harare, Feb 15 (AFP) -- The Zimbabwe Government is threatening to withhold vital services from communities believed to be supporting anti-government rebels.

Schools, development projects, and transport may all be held to ransom in areas in which dissident guerrillas are active, officials have said in statements over the past 10 days.

The tougher line has been the result of growing government frustration in trying to deal with the dissidents who according to the government could not operate in western Matabeleland if residents did not give them food and shelter and warn them of the movements of army patrols. It also follows increased military pressure in Matabeleland where more than 100 civilians have been killed since mid-January, allegedly by soldiers looking for the rebels, who are mostly former members of opposition leader Joshua Nkomo's wartime guerrilla army. Most of the government statements have been made at gatherings of peasant farmers in rural Matabeleland, the political stronghold of Mr Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union [ZAPU], which the government has accused of being behind the dissident violence.

The dissident problem was spared when Mr Nkomo was removed from government a year ago following the discovery of weapons caches allegedly intended for use in a coup. Several thousand ZAPU supporters, mostly from the minority Ndebele-speaking tribe, deserted the army and began a wave of murder, robbery, kidnapping, and destruction of government property.

Speaking to villages in Matabeleland more than a week ago, Education and Culture Minister Dzingai Mutumbuka said the government would close any schools where teachers were harassed by dissidents and would not reopen them until the local people had helped the army catch the rebels. Dissidents have harassed and executed a number of teachers and other government employees belonging to the majority Shona-speaking tribal group, but Mr Mutumbuka said that recently even Ndebele-speaking teachers were endangered. He also said that if buses continued to be burnt by dissidents, bus services would be stopped until residents reported dissidents to police.

Minister of National Supplies Enos Nkala warned villagers at Ntepe, about 130 kms south of Bulawayo, that if another bus was burned residents would face a curfew and would "never taste a hot meal again." Mr Nkala also threatened to shut down development projects in areas where dissidents operated.

Minister of Water Resources and Development Cephas Msipa told groups near Beit Bridge on the South African border that the government did not want anyone to starve because of the country's drought, but that drought relief and the digging of wells could not proceed without peace.

Recent court sentencing for illegal arms possession has also become more severe. A 23-year-old diesel mechanic was sentenced to five years for burying a .22 calibre rifle that was missing its firing pin. A former guerrilla was given 12 years imprisonment after weapons were found buried on his property.

Most observers agree that Matabeleland residents are helping dissidents, but there is disagreement over their motivation and how many of them are doing it. Some distrust Mr Mugabe's Sona-dominated government, while others are simply following the pattern of Zimbabwe's independence war when most of today's dissidents fought in Matabeleland under the ZAPU banner against the white government of Rhodesia. But there are also reasons for the local population to oppose dissidents, as most of the violence has been without apparent political or strategic purpose, and the rebels have committed crimes such as robbery, in which the main victims have been the Matabeleland residents themselves. Many peasant farmers could be keeping quiet simply out of fear for their lives.